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PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
Modern Language Association of America.
1909.

VOL. XXIV, 3.

NEW SERIES, VOL. XVII, 3.

XV.—THE FISHER KING IN THE GRAIL
ROMANCES.

I.

The nearer the knights of Arthur's Court approach the Grail, the more illusive and intangible the holy vessel appears. In Sir Percivale's own words :

“ Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust.”

Thus one might say the Grail symbolizes in its evasiveness the problem of its own origin. For if its source is still to be sought, this is largely because the problem involved so easily eludes one's grasp. The difficulty is to fix the eye on the main issue, to the exclusion of secondary considerations. The Grail stories have been classed as Perceval and Galaad forms, as those in which a quest is the burden of the tale, as those in which it is the history of the sacred vessel itself. In but one feature do they agree, namely in describing a cult or ritual about an infirm person, whose cure apparently is to be effected. Tradition knows him as the Fisher King (*roi pêcheur*), but he is frequently called the Rich Fisher (*riche pêcheur*). It is the object of the present study to

follow up this character and his cult in order thus, if possible, to throw light on the Grail legend as a whole.

Of previous attempts to interpret the Fisher King, the views respectively of Nutt¹ and Heinzel² may be considered typical.³ Both scholars choose as the point of departure the wonderful fish which, in the *Josep^h* attributed to Robert de Boron, Brons catches at the command of Joseph of Arimathea. In Robert the fish later serves to distinguish the sinners from the righteous, and in the *Grand St. Graal* it provides food for the sinners whom the Grail does not satisfy. Robert states that the fish was caught at Christ's will (v. 3310), and that Brons is to be known as the Rich Fisher (v. 3348). The two facts are plainly connected. In the *Grand St. Graal* the same epithet is borne by Alain, because it was at his prayer that Joseph multiplied the one fish so that it fed the host.

Guided by the name Bron, which he equates with Bran the Blessed of Welsh Legend, Nutt identifies⁴ the wonderful fish with the Salmon of Wisdom, appearing "prominently in Irish mythic lore." In the Boyish Exploits of Finn Mac

¹ *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, London, 1888, pp. 207-211; cf. G. Paris, *Rom.*, XVIII, 588-590; H. Zimmer, *Gött. Gelehr. Anzeige*, 1890, pp. 488-528; and Nutt, *Les derniers travaux allemands sur la légende du Saint Graal*, *Rev. Celtiq.*, XII, 181-228; cf. G. Paris, *Rom.*, XX, 504.

² *Ueber die französischen Gralromane*, Vienna, 1892, pp. 100-183; cf. H. Suchier, *Zeit. f. rom. Phil.*, XVI, 269-274; E. Freymond, *Jahresbericht der rom. Philologie*, III, Heft 2, 178-184.

³ See also the interesting treatise by A. N. Wesselofsky: *Zur Frage ueber die Heimath der Legende vom heiligen Gral* in *Archiv f. slav. Philologie*, XXIII (1901), 321-385. Its conclusions, however, are purely tentative, inasmuch as W. considers the question from the Orientalist point of view, and the emphasis is constantly on the *Josep^h* and the *Grand St. Graal*.

For general bibliography see Ed. Wechssler, *Sage vom heiligen Gral*, Halle, 1898; W. Hertz, *Parzival, neu bearbeitet*, Stuttgart, 1898; E. Freymond, *Jahresbericht*, VIII, Heft 2, 263-282.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 208-210.

Cumhail,¹ Finn seeks his namesake, Finn-eges, to learn poetry of him; Finn-eges had passed seven years by the river Boyne watching the salmon of Linn-Feic; finally Finn takes service with him and the salmon is caught. But Finn had been warned not to eat of it. This injunction he breaks inadvertently, and thereby becoming possessed of all knowledge, he is hailed as the successor of Finn. A similar tale is told in Welsh of Gwion,² who tastes of the cauldron of inspiration, also without intent, and who is thereupon reincarnated as Taliesin the bard. In short, according to Nutt, the wonderful fish of Robert is a Christian survival of a feature common to Celtic other-world tales, the magic food whereby a hero is made immortal, and which enables him to be re-born. Its guardian, the fisher, is, through the medium of Bran the Blessed, the representative of the Celtic god Cernunnos,³ "from whom, as Cæsar reports, the Gauls claim descent, and who as god of the otherworld and the shades was also god of knowledge and riches." In other words, the Fisher King is ultimately the Dis or Pluto of the Celtic otherworld.⁴

¹ Text by Kuno Meyer, *Revue Celtique*, v; discussion by Nutt, *Folk-Lore Record*, iv. Cf. also Campbell, *West Highland Tales*, vol. III, no. LVIII ('Rider of Grianraig'), where allusion is made to the "black fisherman working at his tricks," p. 15.

² Gwion and Fionn are parallel Brythonic and Goidelic forms. On Gwion, son of Nudd, see especially J. Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, Paris, 1889, I, p. 252, n.: "rien ne montre mieux l'évolution des personnages mythologiques." Nudd is the Welsh for the *Nodenti deo*, found in the inscriptions of Brittany. Gwion plays the same rôle among the Welsh as Nuada and the Tuatha Dé Danann in Ireland. The legend of St. Collen, cf. Llangollen in Denbigshire and Lan-golen near Quimper in Brittany, shows Christianity in contact with this powerful Celtic deity. See also Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures on Celtic Heathendom*, London, 1888, pp. 179-182, and *Arthurian Legend*, Oxford, 1891, pp. 155 ff.

³ Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, I, 993: "dieselbe wurzel wie latein. *cornu*, 'der gehörnte' = Dis pater bei Caes. *B. G.* 6, 18, dem Juppiter Cernenus der Römer entsprechend."

⁴ Rhys, *Hib. Lec.*, 84; also below, p. 379.

The objection to Nutt's hypothesis has been the apparent lack of strong evidence to support it. This Nutt at the outset himself admitted (p. 224). Too little seemed known about Bran the Blessed fully to justify the identification with Brons and his fish, especially since Celtic tradition contained no evidence that this fish was associated with Bran. According to a late triad he bears the epithet "Blessed" as one of those who first brought the Christian faith to the Cymri, and it may be that the title was thence carried over to the possessor of the cauldron, although we have no account of when and how this conversion took place. In addition, Zimmer¹ maintained that the salmon story is dubious evidence, inasmuch as the Finn-saga is relatively late and confined to Gaelic territory. And, lastly, we should have to assume that Joseph of Arimathea took over in large measure the rôle and characteristics of Brons, who plays the leading part in the other versions of the Grail story. Though these objections are mainly negative and do not disprove Nutt's argument, still his hypothesis has not been generally accepted.

And so we find Heinzel seeking firmer ground by explaining Brons and his fish entirely on a Christian basis.¹ The fish being a time-honored symbol of Christ (Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς θεοῦ υἱὸς Σωτήρ²), it is possible to assume that it once played a more important part in legend than is apparent from existing texts. On early Christian monuments the fish always figures upon the table of the faithful.³

¹ *Gött. Gel. Anzeige*, 1890, 429 ff.; *Zeit. f. deut. Alterthum*, xxxv, 155. See, however, *Revue Celtique*, xii, 189, xiii, 183.

² Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 96 ff.; Hertz, *Parzival*, 426-429.

³ H. Achelis: *Das Symbol des Fisches und die Fischdenkmäler der römischen Katakomben*, Marburg, 1887; Wesselofsky, *op. cit.*, 337.

Further, see below, p. 391. A Syrian elaboration of the story of Tobias and his fish from the *Book of Tobit* is given by Wesselofsky, *op. cit.*, 338-340.

Christ Himself is known as a fisher, and the fishnet is the symbol of the Christian sermon. Instances might be multiplied (Hertz, 427). Whence it is argued that the reappearance of the fish on the Grail table is not a matter of chance; for if the Grail stands for the communion-cup, the fish stands for the sacred wafer, and if the Grail symbolizes, with its contents, the Blood of the Lord, the fish symbolizes His Body.

Accordingly, the name Fisher King is connected with the words of the Saviour: "I shall make ye fishers of men" (*Matth.* iv, 19, *Mark* I, 17, *Luke* v, 10), and a rich fisher would be one who converts many. Such a one is evidently St. Peter, to whom certain of the *Apocrypha*¹ attribute a British mission, and of whom there was a tradition that when summoned to Rome to undergo martyrdom he founded the English church on the eve of his departure.² In the lapse of years these facts were obscured, so that the name reappears in the French Grail works shorn of its real meaning and referring to a king compelled by infirmity or by old age to renounce warfare and take up fishing. That is why the character in Crestien, Wolfram, *Didot-Perceval*, *Perlesvaus*, *Peredur*, and *Grand St. Graal*, fishes from a boat, while in Robert and the *Queste* versions this activity is not mentioned.

The last objection urged against the theory of Nutt holds here with equal emphasis. Joseph, not Brons, is the apostle to the British in the majority of Grail versions, and it is not clear how the substitution occurred. If Peter had been the original Rich Fisher, it is remarkable that his name is found

¹ Heinzel, *Grailromane*, 100, 183.

² *Vita Petri et Pauli*, *Acta Sanctorum*, Junius, v, 146; also Lipsius, *Die Apocry. Apostelgesch.*, Brunswick, 1887, II, 2, 148. Other material can be found in Krüger, *History of Early Christian Literature*, trans. by Gillett, New York, 1897, pp. 88-90.

only in Robert (and in the *Grand St. Graal*, which is based on Robert) and then not in that capacity—an attribute peculiar to Brons. Besides, if the present poem of Robert should be a second redaction,¹ the character of Peter might be an

¹Gaston Paris and J. Ulrich, *Merlin* (Huth version), Paris, 1886, I, XXI, and Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 88–89, hold that Robert rewrote his own poem and that the present work is the second redaction. Suchier, *Zeit. rom. Philologie*, xvi, 270–271, and Wechssler, *Sage*, 125, believe he wrote but one redaction, the present poem. The passages upon which the argument rests are :

Vv. 931–936 :

Se je le grant livre n'avoie,
Ou les estoires sunt escrites,
Par les granz clers faites et dites :
La sunt li grant secré escrit,
Qu' en numme le Graal et dit ;

and vv. 3461 to the end :

Messires Roberz de Boron
Dist se ceci savoir voulun,
Sanz doute savoir convenra, etc.

Sommer, in his recent study : *Messire Robert de Borron u. der Verfasser des Didot-Perceval*, Halle, 1908 (*Beihefte zur Zeits.*, etc.), points out, p. 10, the difficulty of assuming that Robert intended his work to be followed by a 'Perceval' romance. But Sommer's general unreliability is again attested by the argument he bases on the year 1189 (p. 3) as the date when Gautier de Montbéliard left for the Holy Land. Gautier really left France for Italy in 1199, *i. e.*, ten years later, and he did not embark for the Holy Land until 1201.

If Robert was an Anglo-Norman, as Suchier argues, then it might be wise to consider whether the poet who calls himself *je* in vv. 931, 3484, 3489, etc., is not to be distinguished from Robert—as the author of the *grant estoire du graal*, the remodeller of Robert, whose purpose may have been to bring Robert's simpler story into connection with a Perceval-Grail romance. The practice of other contemporary writers (for example, *Yvain*, vv. 6814 ff.), however, is a strong argument against this assumption. Thus Paris's view that Robert wrote in France (see esp. *Journal des Savants*, 1901, p. 708) is on the whole the most acceptable. But in that case, Robert himself was the author of the *grant estoire*, and his source, I take it, was the *grant livre* of v. 931—perhaps a Latin book? Is it not possible to connect the latter with Helinand's *hanc historiam latine scriptam*? I am inclined to date the *Joseph* about 1198; that is, the poem was begun at

addition made in the interests of the conversion story attached to his name. But this is equivalent to saying that Peter is not integrally connected with the Grail legend, and the epithet cannot be due to him. In any case it is natural to assume that the Biblical account of Peter's fishing induced Robert to set him by the side of the Rich Fisher, Brons.

But there is a more important circumstance which militates against the acceptance of Heinzel's theory: the Grail romances as a class have a heterodox tinge, which is not superficial. In Crestien and his continuators, including Wolfram, this trait is obvious; but the careful reader will discern it also in the most Christian forms of the story, where the Grail ceremony is compared to but is never identified with the actual celebration of the Eucharist.¹ Thus the Roman church never took cognizance of the existence of a Grail story, and the Grail works cannot be regarded as purely an ecclesiastical product, even when we recognize their proselyting spirit, and admit—as we do in the *Perlesvaus*—that they intentionally further a monastic cause.²

Montbéliard, while Gautier was still there, *en peis*, in a time of peace. This seems to me to be a likely interpretation of the well-known lines:

“ A ce tens que je la reteis
O mon seigneur Gautier en peis,
Qui de Mont-Belyal estoit,
Unques retraite esté n'avoit
La grant estoire dou Graal.”

I note that Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 113 would also interpret them in this way. But the date, 1201, he gives for Gautier's departure is wrong; at that time Gautier had left home.

¹ Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 179 and Martin, *Parzival u. Titurel*, 2nd part, Halle, 1903, L ff.

² *Modern Philology*, I, 257 ff. The first redaction of *Perlesvaus* was, I believe, composed in the interest of Glastonbury Abbey. It can be shown, too, that Glastonbury stood in intimate relationship with Fécamp, with which Miss Weston connected the Wauchier section of the *Conte del Graal* (*Legend of Sir Perceval*, I, 1906, pp. 156 ff.). I shall return to this question later.

Now the least Christian feature in the legend is the Fisher King and his cult. The parallelism with Christ apparently stops with the name Fisher. If we disregard for the moment the version of Robert, the ritual in which he appears is certainly not founded on the synoptic accounts of the Last Supper, and the striking features of it have no immediate counterpart in Christian or Biblical lore.¹ The true explanation I believe is to be sought elsewhere. Before proceeding further, however, it will be well to grasp clearly his salient traits as they present themselves in the various versions of the legend.

The following abbreviations will be used :

- C. Crestien, before 1180.²
- W. Wölfram, about 1217.³
- Wa. Wauchier de Denain.⁴
- G. Gerbert de Montreuil.⁵
- M. Manessier.⁶
- R. Robert de Boron.⁷

¹ I do not wish to imply that the Eucharist and the Grail ceremony may not go back to similar primitive rites ; see Eisler, *Origins of the Eucharist*, cited below.

² Wechssler, *Sage*, 148 ff. The *Conte del Graal* is dedicated to Philip of Flanders. Inasmuch as Philip was a patron of letters (cf. Brakelmann, *Les plus anciens chansonniers français*, 1891, p. 13), Crestien's praise of him requires no special explanation. Thus we can agree with Gaston Paris (*Journal des Savants*, 1902, p. 305), that the poem was written about 1175.

³ Martin, *Parzival*, p. xiii.

⁴ Paul Meyer, *Rom.*, xxxii, 583. For the best synopsis see Jessie L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, London, 1906, ch. II. Wauchier also translated a series of Saints Lives for Philip, Marquis de Namur. I do not here distinguish between Wauchier and Pseudo-Wauchier (see Heinzel, *op. cit.*), as I am not yet prepared to take sides on the question ; see Jean-roy, *Revue des lang. rom.* (1907), L, 541-544.

⁵ Also author of the *Conte de la Violette* ; see Kraus, *Ueber Gerb. de Montreuil*, 1897 ; Wilmotte, *Gerb. de M. et les écrits qui lui sont attribués*, Brussels, 1900, and Gröber's *Grundriss*, II, 509.

⁶ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. li.

⁷ Cf. above ; the abbreviation (R.) will be used only for the Metrical *Joseph*.

- E. Elucidation to the *Conte del Graal*.
 Q. *Queste* (Furnivall).
 D. *Didot-Perceval*, corrected by the Modena MS.
 Perl. *Perlesvaus*, about 1200.
 GS. *Grand St. Graal* (Hucher).
 K. *Diu Cróne*, about 1215.¹
 P. *Peredur ab Ebrauc*.²

(a) NAME: As was said above, R. employs the name *riche pêcheur*, which he gives solely to Brons. C. generally uses *roi pêcheur*.³ The two names are so similar, and are so often confused in the MSS., that it is impossible to base a sharp distinction upon them. Yet C. and his continuators (one might except G.) evidently prefer the title *roi pêcheur*, whereas E., Q., GS., employ mostly *riche pêcheur*, and D. has first *riche pêcheur*, but later in the episode resembling the Grail Visit in C., it uses *roi pêcheur*. The matter may depend, as Heinzel suggests, upon whether the "fishing" or the "kingship" is uppermost in the mind of the poet. Possibly there was a time when both concepts were equally strong: cf. C., v. 4673—*le rice roi Pesceour*. This seems plausible: the character was originally both a fisher and a king; for it is conceivable that R. with his evident desire to theologize omitted the kingship and emphasized the fishing.⁴

(b) INFIRMITY: The Fisher King is either very old or ill; that, at least, is the general conception of him. For if R. says nothing of either trait, it is incredible that he considered Brons other than old, inasmuch as he is to hand the Grail to his grandson, Perceval. In C., M., W., GS., Q., Perl., and P.,⁵ it is clearly stated that he is ill; the illness is

¹ J. H. F. Scholl, *Litt. Verein*, cxvi, Stuttgart, 1873.

² J. Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, Paris, 1889, vol. II.

³ See, however, v. 7791, *Et del rice Pesceour croi*.

⁴ Perl. seems to follow C.: *li rois Peschierres* (Pot. I, 2), *au riche roi Peschéor* (Pot. I, 15).

⁵ Also in Rochat's *Perceval*, Zurich, 1855.

related in some way with the Grail question; either it will be dispelled by asking the question, or, as in Perl., it springs from the fact that the question is not asked. In E., Wa., and G., however, the Fisher King is not himself ill, but his land lies waste (so in GS. because of Bruillan's blow),¹ and its restoration depends on the asking of the question. In D. he is both old and infirm:² a combination of the two ideas.

The illness is usually due to a wound. In C., M., and GS. the wound was inflicted with a spear thrust through the thighs (C., v. 4691 *parmi les hances ambedeus*). In W., and Q.,³ it is caused by the lance, though in W. it is not the lance of Longinus.⁴ In Q., GS., and G., Evalach-Mordrain⁵—a parallel to the Fisher King's father—is covered with wounds. In Wa., M., Q.,⁶ GS., the Fisher King has a relative, usually a brother,⁷ who has been killed by a sword, whereby the fruitfulness of the country has also been destroyed—this sword the Grail hero pieces together.

(c) DOUBLE OR COUNTERPART. In most versions the Fisher King has by his side a mysterious person, who also awaits the Grail hero, and whom in C. and W. the Grail particularly serves.⁸ As a rule he is a relative: in C., W.,

¹ Compare the blow struck by Balan in Malory's Paraphrase of the *Huth-Merlin*; G. Paris and J. Ulrich, *op. cit.*, II, 28.

² When cured he is *revenus en sa juvence*; cf. W.

³ Likewise in the *Prose Tristan* (ed. Löseth, *Bibl. Ec. des haut. étud.*, 82), Paris, 1890.

⁴ In the *Huth-Merlin* Pellehan is wounded by the lance of Longinus. The lance was regarded in the north as the immediate cause of Jesus's death: *Evangelium Nicodemi*, ed. Tischendorf, ch. VII; Bugge-Schofield, *Home of the Eddic Poems*, London, 1899, Introd. 43 ff.; Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 9.

⁵ Rhys identifies *Evalach* with Welsh *Avallac, Avallon*; *Arth. Legend*, 324. Rightly, I believe.

⁶ In Q. even Joseph of Arimathea has been wounded through the thighs.

⁷ In Q. and GS. he is Lambar, the father of the Lame King, Pellean.

⁸ C., v. 6039, *Quel rice home on en servoit*; Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 5.

G., Q. and GS. the Fisher King's father.¹ In Wa., (apparently also E.) he seems to be the dead knight on the bier. The rôle, it seems, is taken by Petrus in R. and also by Evalach-Mordrain in GS. It would seem that the head on the salver in P. belongs to this person.²

(d) ABODE: He resides at the Grail castle, the other-world nature of which is admitted. In Perl. it bears the names *Edein*, *Chastiax de Joie*, and *Chastiax des a(r)mes*,³ perhaps directly due to Glastonbury influence. In Q., and GS. it lies in the *terre foraine (sauvage)*, in K. in *Illes*. It is found by chance, rarely before nightfall; and on the morning following the visit it has vanished (Wa.), or become deserted. In many versions it lies beyond a river, behind a mountain; cf. C., W., P., D., Perl. In order to reach it, the hero at times needs a "helpful animal"⁴—for example, a white mule—which carries him safely over a dangerous bridge, resembling the well-known soul-bridge⁵ (Wa.,⁶ and

¹ In M. the Fisher King has a brother, Goon Desert; in Perl. also the *Rois du Chastel Mortel*. Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 118 ff., identifies the two, since Partinal in M. is apparently based on Perceval, Parzival. In other words, M. and Perl. contain the *motif* of the King of the Waste City, who is naturally opposed to the Fisher- (or Life-, see below) King. As to the 'double,' there seems to be a confusion in M., for Goon appears also to be the equivalent of Gonemans in C. In Perl., on the other hand, the 'double' is certainly the knight in the *tonnel* on the monks' island (Pot, I, 328), and his name may possibly be Evalach, *i. e.*, Welsh Avallac, Avalon. Cf. note 5, p. 374.

² In Perl. (Pot., I, 128) the damsel in the boat with the Fisher carries a truncated human head. For the complex relationships in Q. and GS., see Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 143 and *passim*.

³ Pot., I, 249.

⁴ On the 'helpful animal' as distinguished from the 'grateful animal,' see O. M. Johnston, *Zeit. franz. Spr. u. Lit.*, xxxi, 158 ff.

⁵ The bridge is of glass or ice, or it is a sword. On the last idea, cf. *Kulhwch and Olwen*, Loth, *Mabinogion*, I, where a dagger serves as a crossing for the armies of Britain; also G. Paris, *Rom.*, xii, 508 ff.; E. J. Becker, *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell*, Baltimore, 1899, pp. 17, 44, 76, 85; Lucy A. Paton, *Fairy Mythol. of Arth. Romance*, Boston, 1903, p. 85, note.

⁶ Second Grail Visit.

Perl.¹). In the C. versions the Grail knight is directed to it by the Fisher King, whom he finds fishing in a boat; elsewhere more mysterious means are employed, such as "two children in a tree" (D.) and "a chapel of the black hand" (Wa., Q.). In Perl., Q., and GS., the final sanctuary of the Grail is beyond the sea (*terra repromissionis* or Sarras).

Agreeing with the otherworld traits is the fact that the Fisher King has the power to shift his shape, so common a feature in Irish and Welsh folk-lore.² (In E. we read: "a hundred times he changed his semblance.") Also, that in Perl. he is combatted by the king of the Dead Castle, who has stolen the Grail, and in E. by King Amangons³ who violated the guardians of the springs so that the land became barren and the Court of the Rich Fisher, "which had filled the land with plenty and splendour,"⁴ could no more be found.

(e) HIS PART IN THE GRAIL RITUAL. As was stated before, the Fisher King, not Perceval, Galaad, Bors, Lancelot or Gawain—all of whom behold the Grail (in Perl., even Arthur)—is the figure about whom the Grail ceremony centers. His life and happiness depend upon the success of the ceremony; for when the "quest" is truly completed, he is either restored to health and prosperity or his suffering finds relief in death. Then, too, the barren soil becomes productive, and in D. and Q. it is said "the enchantments of Great Britain and of the whole world cease."⁵ Indeed,

¹ Second Grail Visit.

² See A. C. L. Brown, *Iwain*, 1903 (*Harvard Studies*, VIII), p. 42. The trait is characteristic of Manannán Mac Lir, but others possess it as well, cf. Rhys, *Celtic Folk-Lore*, Oxford, 1901, II, ch. XI, and below.

³ In the *Chev. as deus espees* (ed. Foerster, 1877), v. 12121, Amangons is ruler of the "land whence no one returns"; so also Baudemagus in Crestien's *Charrete*, v. 201.

⁴ Nutt, *op. cit.*, 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 32; Hucher I, 484.

in Perl. the moral languor of the Arthurian Court springs from the failure at the *ostel au riche roi Peschéor*.¹

It is not necessary to discuss here in detail the Grail and the sacred objects or relics surrounding it.² Suffice it to mention that beside the Grail and the lance, a sword, several plates (in W. "knives") and in two versions (E. and Wa.) a silver cross are carried in the Grail procession. Since the Fisher King's wound,³ however, is ascribed to the lance,⁴—in W. the lance is known from this fact alone,—it is necessary to consider somewhat its part in the ceremony.

In seven out of twelve versions the lance precedes the Grail; in not all of these does it "drip" blood. C., notably, calls it *la blanche lance* in spite of its bleeding, and in W. the blood on it comes from the Fisher King's wound. But in only one of the five versions in which the lance follows the Grail, does its blood flow into the holy vessel (Perl.), and there it is to be noted that the Fisher King is not wounded but infirm because of the Grail Knight's previous failure. The fact that the lance does not occur at all in R., while in P. it alone occurs without the Grail, and in C. Gawain undertakes a separate quest to find it, shows clearly that Grail and lance are not as intimately associated as is sometimes supposed.⁵ It is conceivable, in fact, that at one time the lance was as important as the Grail; in two versions (W. and P.), at least, its independence of the Grail is seen in the lamentations accompanying its appearance, which subside before the Grail is brought in.⁶ Robert, as

¹ *Old French Grail Romance Perlesvaus*, Baltimore, 1902, pp. 44 ff.

² See summary of Heinzel's *Gralroman*.

³ E., Wa., M. and D. alone mention Longinus (*Longis*).

⁴ But not in C; there it is due to a *gaverlot*, v. 4690. See above.

⁵ Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 10, mentions an "ursprüngliche Selbständigkeit der Lanze."

⁶ In E. the Grail Damsel mourns; see Nutt, *op. cit.*, 9, also W.

will be recalled, is the first to speak of *the* Grail; to Crestien the word *grail* was still a common noun.

Thus the following sequence suggests itself:

1. The Grail story deals primarily with the cure of a mysterious being: the Fisher King, Rich Fisher, or Rich Fisher King.

2. His suffering, reflected in the barrenness of his land or even of Great Britain, is due to several causes. In the first place, however, to a lance or spear which has been thrust through his thighs.

3. His cure and the restoration of his land depend on the success of a ceremony in which a certain question is to be asked.

4. This ceremony consists in part of a procession before the king, in which a lance, in some cases the one with which his wound has been inflicted, and a food-giving vessel are shown, together with other sacramental objects.

5. It takes place in an abode with otherworld traits, such as remoteness, difficulty of approach (lying beyond the water), invisibility, and the like.

6. The cure is effected by a youth endowed with special qualities: strength (P.), wisdom (C.), humility (W.), and purity (Q.).

7. When successful, the latter shares in the Fisher King's mysterious existence and is considered the possessor of certain important secrets.¹

8. The Fisher King has a companion or double, from whom he cannot be dissociated. When living, this companion is sustained in a supernatural way; in C. by the Grail.

9. The ceremony often begins with lamentations (Wa., W., P.), and concludes, if a success, with rejoicing.²

¹Specifically in the R. group.

²Cf. the *Chastiax de Joie* in Perl., Pot. I, 91.

For the purpose of argument I shall assume that the Fisher King is an otherworld being, a sort of intermediary between this world and the next; this his character in general would indicate, especially in the light of recent investigations,¹ and then the fact that his kingdom is accessible over a very narrow bridge. Through him mortal man gains knowledge of the secrets of existence. But Nature herself is dependent on him; for when his power wanes,² the country is laid waste and the soil rendered sterile. In order to restore his strength or that of his double,³ certain rites are

¹ See below, pp. 380 ff.; also Nutt, *Studies*, ch. vii.

² This trait seems to me to be fundamental. Consult Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of Kingship*, 89 ff. The motif of the 'Lame King' pertains to the same idea. His name is Pellean, which possibly represents a confusion of Pelles and Alain (R.), for in the *Vulgate Quest* he is also the father of Perceval; cf. below, p. 398, n. 5, on the *πατήρ* in the Mediterranean cults. In the *Domanda* and the *Huth-Merlin* Perceval's father is Pellinor; in the latter romance (I, 258) it is he who pursues the *diverse beste*, as Arthur does the *porcus troit* in Nennius (Dottin, *Religion des Celtes*, Paris, 1904, p. 28), an animal generally known as the *beste glatissant*. On this animal, see Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 154 and Wesselofsky, *op. cit.*, 378-381; to all appearances it is a *totem-animal*, dating from the 'zoöomorphic' period among the Celts; see Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, Paris, 1906, vol. II, pp. 83-122: "La Mort d'Orphée."

Pellean's wound is inflicted by Balaain, according to Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 297, n. < Celtic Belinos; cf. Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, Bél-ěno-s, Old Irish gval = *brennen*, compared by the Romans to 'Apollo.' Balaain wields the *lanche vencheresse*, *Huth-Merlin*, II, 7, 27, which had belonged to Longinus (cf. below, p. 404), and which he finds on a golden table beside a marvelous bed on which lies Joseph of Arimathea. See Heinzel, *Grailromane*, 174, 66-67, note. Pelles, with Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 283, I have previously equated with Welsh Pwyll, a name which also occurs in Brittany; see Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, Paris, 1889, I, 27. My argument can be found in *Modern Philology*, I, 252-254. Cf. Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, s. v. Pëllus, Ir. Cíall = *Verstand*, W. Pwyll; so Pelles might mean the 'wise one.'

³ In Q., as I pointed out, p. 375, the double is Pellean (*roi méhaignië*). Perhaps Q. thus retains a primitive trait; or is the double himself a secondary personage? See Heinzel's argument, *Grailromane*, 12, and below, p. 398, on what is said concerning the Greek *πατήρ*.

required, which become efficacious when shared in by a person whose qualifications have been tested. The latter, the Grail Knight, is thereby made immortal and becomes the Fisher King's successor. The epithet "rich," doubtless applied early to the Fisher King, is possibly emblematic of his creative function,¹ though it is of course a royal epithet.

The suggestion I make is not in itself new. As far back as 1842, Simrock² in his notes to San Marte's translation of W. suggested that the basis of the Grail concept, like the motive of the St. John-Herodias story, is the "reproductive power of the blood of the slain god (Odin-Hachelbrand, Baldur, Adonis, Osiris)." Martin,³ writing in 1880 in support of the Celtic hypothesis, identifies the Fisher King with Arthur passing a charmed life in Avalon, and sees in both the myth of the summer god banished by the forces of winter. Heinzel, too, mentions the life-cult element but regards it as unessential.⁴ To Miss Weston belongs the credit of setting it in its proper place, though she confines herself practically to one version of the legend, and emphasizes, to my mind, a secondary matter, namely, the possibility of explaining the Grail and Lance as phallic symbols.⁵ In addition, Staerk⁶ has pointed out an eastern parallel to

¹ *Riche* in Old French of course connotes 'power.'

² K. Simrock, *Parcival und Titurel, uebersetzt u. erläutert*, Stuttgart, 1842-76. The Herodias tale merits a separate study in this connection. In Perl. Gawain's sword is that whereby John the Baptist was beheaded; W. brings Prester John into his work, even if he leaves out the Baptist; Kundry, according to Wagner, is Herodias. Cf. Nutt, *op. cit.*, 100.

³ *Zur Gralsage (Quellen u. Forschungen, XLII)*, Strassburg, 1880; also *Zeit. deutsch. Alterthumskunde*, 1878, 84 ff.

⁴ *Grälromane*, see summary; also 70-72.

⁵ *Folk-Lore*, XVIII (1907), 283-305.

⁶ *Ursprung der Grallegende*, Tübingen, 1903. See the interesting review of Staerk's study by Konrad Burdach in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, xxiv (1903), 3050-3058. Of particular value, for the literary development of the legend, are his remarks on the *introitus* in the Greek church

the Fisher King in Adapa the Wise, the son of Eas lord of Eridu "at the mouth of the rivers," who serves his father with bread and water and carries on fishing upon the sea; the story is a part of the Hades-Paradise myth of the Babylonians.¹ But that the Fisher King is the central figure of the Grail story, and thus probably the crux of the Grail problem, can, I believe, be shown by a comparison with the Mysteries of Antiquity. In making such a comparison the prime object is to ascertain, if possible, the organic meaning of the Grail theme; in other words, to define the situation which produced it, and not to determine, except indirectly, its historic origin,—that I shall leave for a second study. Though we now know that the cults of Mithra, Isis, and the Great Mother (Cybele) were carried into Gaul and even Britain in the stream of Roman colonization, and that Mithraism in the form of Manicheism had a recrudescence in France in the heresies of the Middle Ages,² yet it is doubtful whether these influences were operative in forming the Grail legend, though they might have been a contributing element, especially later on. *A priori*, as we shall see, it is likely that the resemblances to which I am about to call

("fraglos antiken Mysterienprozessionen nachgebildete Pompa des Introitus") and on the presence of the lance in eastern ecclesiastical rites—on this point see Heinzel, *op. cit.*, 9. Burdach promises to consider the origin of the literary form of the Grail story ("doch wohl in der Provence oder deren Nachbarschaft") in his "demnächst erscheinenden Buche." This line of investigation seems to me especially promising with respect to W; in fact, to all of the later works with oriental coloring. But I do not see its bearing on C., Wa., E., Perl., or indeed R. itself.

¹ Meissner, *Babylonische Bestandteile in mod. Sagen u. Gebräuchen in Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, v, 219.

² See F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments relatifs au culte de Mithra*, Brussels, 1899, I, 349. And Professor F. M. Warren gives me the following references: Ademar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, III, chapters 49 and 59; Raoul Glaber, *Historiæ* (in the *Collection pour servir à l'étude*, etc.), ed. Prou, 1886, II, ch. 11; III, ch. 8.

attention are the result of similar circumstances of living and surroundings. As M. Reinach¹ says: "Il est singulier que l'exégèse mythologique se soit complu à expliquer les ressemblances par des emprunts bien plus longtemps que la linguistique. Pour justifier le recours à cette hypothèse, il ne suffit pas de la constatation d'une ressemblance entre deux mots ou deux mythes: il faut tout un faisceau d'analogies et d'homophonies."

II.

Mysteries of a sacramental kind were celebrated over almost the whole ancient world.² They were in fact the typical religious expression of the peoples of the eastern periphery of the Mediterranean. But whatever their various origins were;³ and to whatever degree they may have interacted and been assimilated to each other, in Greece their most distinctive form⁴ must be sought in connection with

¹ *Op. cit.*, 89.

² Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. III, Oxford, 1907, p. 143: "Mystery-cults may be regarded as an ancient heritage of Mediterranean religion."

³ On the distribution of Oriental cults, especially in the West, see F. Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, Paris, 1907, and C. H. Moore, in *Publ. Amer. Phil. Assoc.*, XXVIII (1908), 109 ff.

⁴ I have sought to secure the authenticity of my evidence by taking it from authorities recognized as such in a field which I am myself unable to control. And I have endeavored further to ascertain the validity of their results by reference to O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie u. Religionswissenschaft*, Munich, 1906, and his *Jahresbericht* for 1898-1905, vol. 137, Leipzig, 1908. The former work is part of I. von Müller's *Handbuch der klass. Alterthumswissenschaft* and will be cited by the abbreviation *Hdb.* W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie* and Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der class. Wissenschaften* were freely consulted.

Besides these authorities, the following works were used on Eleusis in particular: P. Foucart, *Recherches sur l'origine et la nature des mystères d'Éleusis* in *Acad. d. inscr. et belles lettres*, XXXV (1896) and XXXVI (1900); *idem*, *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique* in *ibid.*, XXXVII (1906); G. Anrich,

the worship of Demeter-Kore at Eleusis, in Egypt with Osiris and Isis, in Syria with Adonis or Tammuz,¹ in Phrygia with Attis,² and in imperial Rome with the light-god Mithra.³ It must be noted also that the cult of Orpheus—or Orphism⁴—was a powerful factor in the Greek world,

Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christenthum, Götttingen, 1894, and finally vol. III of L. R. Farnell's *Cults of the Greek States*, Oxford, 1907.

¹ On Osiris and Adonis see especially: J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, London, 1906; Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, 4 vols., Paris, 1893 ff.; Erwan, *Die Aegyptische Religion*, Berlin, 1904; C. Vellay, *Le Culte et les Fêtes d'Adonis*, Paris, 1904 (this last with caution).

² On Attis, besides Frazer's work: H. Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen u. sein Kult*, Giessen, 1903; Showermann, *The Great Mother of the Gods* (Bulletin 43 of Univ. of Wisconsin), Madison, 1901.

³ On Mithra, the monumental work of F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, 2 vols., Brussels, 1894–1900; Roeses, *Ueber Mithradienst*, Stralsund, 1905; Salomon Reinach, *La morale du Mithraïsme in Cultes, mythes et religions*, II, 1905, pp. 220 ff. An important work is also that of Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig, 1903, though D.'s conclusions have not proved wholly acceptable; see especially Reitzenstein, *Neue Jahrb. f. das class. Alterthum*, 1904, p. 192; also Gruppe's *Jahresbericht*.

⁴ On Orpheus, especially Roscher, *Lexikon der Mythologie*, and several articles by S. Reinach in vol. II of his *Cultes, mythes et religions*.

The background of Orphism seems to have been the murder and resurrection of Zagreus, the 'horned serpent.' We should note especially the kinship which Reinach points out, p. 58 ff., of this myth with that depicted in Gaul upon the altar of Mavilly and on other monuments presumably of Celtic origin, including the famous vase of Gundestrup (*Revue Archéol.*, 1891, pp. 1–6; *ibid.*, 1897, pp. 313–326; *idem*, *Bronzes figurés*, 195). In this connection, Nutt's identification of our Fisher King with the Gallic deity Cernunnos (Gr. Κάρνν) 'the horned one,' attains fresh interest; see above, p. 367.

Finally, mention must be made of Robert Eisler's researches in connection with the Eucharist, and the etymology he proposes for Orpheus < ὄρφος meaning "fish," Orpheus being a "regular derivation from this old noun and meaning the 'fisher.' " A short article from his pen, *The Origins of the Eucharist*, was published under section VIII of the International Congress of Religions held in Oxford last September (1908), and more is to follow, I understand, from the press of Beck and Co., Munich.

The standard work on Orphism seems to be Ernst Maas, *Orpheus, Untersuchungen zur griech. römisch. altchrist. Jenseitsdichtung u. Religion*, Munich, 1895; cf. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 2nd ed., 1898, II, 107 ff.

giving rise to the so-called Orphic literature, a part of which is preserved in the Orphic Hymns—though its origin as well as that of Orphism itself is by no means clear. Taking the Eleusinia as a type, for scholars seem agreed that they were both agrarian and mystic from the start, we may say the mysteries in general served a double purpose: first, to induce through a sacrificial feast the fructification of nature; secondly, to initiate the human soul into the secret of life by bringing it, as it were, into relationship with the life deity. These two features, of course, were not present to an equal degree in all the cults that went under the name of mysteries. Besides, in the genuine mysteries, where they are found, the ‘mystic’ aspect is to be variously interpreted. It would be wrong, for example, to claim that it necessarily consisted in a distinct doctrine of immortality. If the soul was really to obtain through the mystery in a small degree what it was naturally in quest of,—the Homeric hymn says: “happy is he who has seen these mysteries: but he who has no share in them has by no means an equal lot in the darkness of the dead,”—it is highly probable that this concept varied with time and place, and we should guard against confusing our Christian notions with it.¹ Nevertheless, since the mystery was obviously a life-cult, it is only natural to assume that it had a special sacramental significance for those initiated into it, if not at once, then in an increasing degree with the progress of human civilization.

The scope and importance of the Eleusinia, however, are fairly well known. According to Gruppe,² they sprang from a desire to protect the crops against harmful spirits, the guardian invoked being Demeter, with whose epithet Eleutho (= ‘deliverer’) he considers the name Eleusis connected.³

¹ Farnell, III, 192 and *passim*.

² *Hdb.*, 48–58; here a special bibliography will be found.

³ “Eine andere Form für Eileithgia . . . im Alterthum wahrscheinlich also Löserin gedeutet.”

He regards the worship of Demeter as indigenous in Crete, where, as in Eleusis, it was linked with the cult of Zeus Kataibatos¹—a sort of Pluto—and was celebrated at the entrance to a cave or rift in the earth. Whatever may be the validity of this view, Demeter, as Farnell² states, evidently had “as an accessory in the background, the ravisher and husband, the god of the lower world, by whatever name he was called.” Thus her worship had early to do with a knowledge of the hereafter. One of its early features was the quarterly plowing or tilling of the soil, corresponding later to the three blossomings of the Narcissus. By the eighth century the Demeter cult, it seems, had been expanded to agree with Boeotian traditions, such as the Rape of Persephone and the tale of Demeter’s wanderings—though Farnell points out that Kore and not Persephone “was the official name for the daughter at Eleusis.” In the fifth Homeric hymn we have an account of an annual festival at Eleusis with combats, races, and a procession; a funeral service at the spring Parthenion, and a feast preceded by fasting, at the so-called “laughless rock,” the ἀγέλαστος πέτρα, the favorite seat of Demeter. Helios now directs Demeter on her way, and illumines with his rays the souls of mortals so that they become ἐπόπται or “seers”; a stage which the neophyte, however, could not enter upon until after a year’s waiting or until he had passed through a second celebration.³ Presently Poseidon⁴

¹ *Hdb.*, § 68: “Kataibatos, eines in der Tiefe hausenden Gottes, dessen Hilfe man anrief, um Regen u. Gewitter heraufzubeschwören, weshalb man ihm auch dem Zeus Keraunios gleichsetzte”—thus another vegetation god.

² *Op. cit.*, 134.

³ Farnell, *op. cit.*, p. 173; Foucart, *Recherches, passim*.

⁴ See especially Farnell, vol. iv, 36—where the belief is expressed that the cult-title is the ancestral patronymic of the clan; see, however, below, in the discussion of Attis, who has the same title.

makes his appearance at Eleusis—with the epithet ‘father,’ which has been variously interpreted as expressing the belief that Persephone was his daughter or that he was the ancestor of the famous Eleusinian clan, the Eumolpidae, in whose hands lay “the mystic celebration itself and the formal privilege of admission,” though the Kerykes also had a share in this. But inasmuch as Poseidon was “the fertilizing water-god,” his appearance by the side of Demeter, however secondary it may be, seems accounted for, and the epithet applied to him may be attributed to his function as a ‘creative’ god.

Thus, in short, the Eleusinia grew in importance until by the fifth century B. C., if not earlier, they attained Panhellenic renown.¹

From the sacramental point of view the mystery was an initiation entailing certain requirements on the neophyte or initiate. What these were is not absolutely certain. Yet there exist two statements, at least, in pagan writers which suggest a kind of moral scrutiny.² Libanus reports that the candidates ‘must be pure in hand and soul and of Hellenic speech’; and Origen quoting from Celsus affirms that “those who invite people to other mysteries (as distinct from the Christian) make the proclamation, ‘(come all ye) who are pure of hand and of intelligible speech.’” Without by any means affirming that he who desired to enter the mysteries must have ‘put on incorruption,’—for to quote Rohde:³ “es war ein sanfter Ausblick, nicht eine an sich ziehende, aus dem Leben ziehende Aufforderung,”—we may still say that the moral injunction here is clear, though originally it may have been mainly ritualistic.⁴ And the reference to the neophyte’s speech can have no other than ceremonial value,

¹ Farnell, III, 156; also Rohde, *Psyche*, 2nd ed., I, 282 ff.

² Farnell, III, 166.

³ *Op. cit.*, I, 300.

⁴ Farnell, III, 168.

either excluding Barbarians or implying that ceremonial words are operative only when spoken intelligibly.¹ So, too, the hierophant, as the celebrant was called from the *ἱερά* (sacred objects), was vowed to continual chastity. In fact, so sacred was his person and manner of life that no one ever ventured to address him by his personal name. He was always a member of the Eumolpidae, who thus illustrated the principle of apostolic succession. "It was he who was said to 'reveal the orgies,' 'to show the things of mystery.' He alone could penetrate into the innermost shrine, the *μέγαρον* or the *ἀνάκτορον*, in the hall of mysteries, whence, at the most solemn moment of the celebration, his form suddenly appeared transfigured in light before the rapt gaze of the initiated."²

The hierophant also took a leading part in the mystic play that was enacted. This seems to have been virtually a representation of the local Demeter myth, the theme of which was probably the loss of the daughter, the sorrow of the mother, and the ultimate recovery of the lost one—to the mystic perhaps an image of the course of the human soul after death. In close connection with the drama, probably interwoven with it, were a feast and a sacred procession.³

The former, which was preceded by fasting, consisted of the consumption of some *κυκέων* (a drink) and a bread or cake from a sacred basket, known in Eleusis as *κάλαθος*. "In drinking the *κυκέων*," says Farnell,⁴ "the *mystae* drank of the same cup as the goddess drank of when at last she broke her nine days' fast in the midst of her sorrow, and the antiquity of this ritual is attested by the Homeric hymn." The basket, however, was known by other names in other

¹ *Idem*, 167 ; Foucart, *Recherches*, 33.

² Farnell, III, 156.

³ Foucart, *Recherches*, 63 ; Gruppe, *l. c.*

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 186 and discussion in *Hdb.*

places ; as *λίκνον* in the separate Dionysos mysteries, *ἐλένη* in the Artemis rites, etc. But at Eleusis it was probably subordinate to the *κίστη* which also contained bread, but rather as the symbol of the life-giving god, since *κίστη* is emblematic of the mysteries as a class,¹ just as the Grail stands for the ceremony associated with it. That the neophyte should partake of this food is, according to Gruppe, the basic idea of all communion services : “*der Mensch will das göttliche Wesen, das natürlich materiell gedacht, durch die Natur zerstreut ist, in sich aufnehmen.*”²

The sacred procession also brought the initiate into relationship with the deity—but through the avenue of sight. This was the act whereby the hierophant revealed to him the sacred objects. Apparently they were taken out of the *μέγαρον*, into which the hierophant alone could enter, and, their covers being removed, they appeared to the *mystae* in brilliant illumination. What they were is not known, yet it seems probable that among them were legendary relics, “such,” says Farnell, “as would cause a religious tremor in the spectator.”

A point of great interest here, though likely to remain obscure, unless further discoveries shed light, is the mention in an Eleusinian expense account of the year 410 B. C., of the use of an *ἄκατος* or skiff. How it was used the inscription does not explain.³ Foucart, to whom the Eleusinia seem Egyptian in character—though this view is not generally shared,—compared the reference to a Greek inscription of the Empire, consecrated to the society of the Gallipoli. Here we have a distinct account of a mystic fishing-ceremony ; the persons who take part being an archanon or chief

¹ The *κίστη* probably contained a fetish dangerous to look upon ; for this and the *κέρνος*—another ritualistic vessel—see *Hdb.*, 1171, note.

² *Hdb.*, 729.

³ Foucart, *Recherches*, 36–38 ; also *Bull. de corresp. hellénique*, 1877, p. 410.

of the society, two pilots, a person to throw the nets, several to draw them in, etc., in short the *personnel* for such a rite. It must be said, too, that the cult of Dionysos,¹ whose particular rites were celebrated at Limnae in the so-called Anthesteria, had early taken root at Eleusis and been in part confounded with that of Demeter, so that Dionysos was at times considered the Eleusinian Pluto.² Dionysos's connection with the water is unquestioned, and his name is often associated with a ship. In this respect, as well as others, he is akin to Osiris.

If now we turn to the Egyptian mysteries, in which the doctrine of a future life is prominently developed, we find as a central feature the search for Osiris by his wife and sister (double) Isis.³ Herodotus (II, 171) and others testify that this search was simulated in a skiff on the sacred lake or Nilæum of the Egyptian temple. The *De Iside et Osiride* of Plutarch affirms that the ceremony was an imitation of the wanderings and misfortunes of the goddess in search of her dismembered spouse: in the end she recovers the fourteen pieces into which he has been torn, and her sorrow turns to joy; for Osiris lives again. To the Egyptian the ship was naturally the vehicle of the dead; so it was also to the Greek, and its presence at Eleusis is no reason for wonder. What is interesting is the use it was put to in the Egyptian ritual, where the simulator of the god, the priest of Isis, the guide to the otherworld, had the chief part. I believe his western counterpart is our Fisher King.

Before drawing this inference, however, it is necessary to consider somewhat in detail the testimony of the other Mediterranean cults. The complex question of their possi-

¹ See, especially, Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionysos, passim*; *Hdb.*, 1420-21; Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, col. 1171.

² Farnell, III, 153.

³ Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 162 ff.

ble interrelation does not concern us. It suffices to note certain distinctive traits in them. The kinship, in Babylonian myth, of Adapa the Wise with the water—as pointed out by Staerk—was mentioned above. Adonis, meaning ‘lord’ (cf. Attis = ‘father,’ like the Eleusinian Poseidon), is really an appellative for Tammuz,¹ and the latter name is thought to be derived from a Sumerian phrase meaning “true son of the deep water.” His name occurs first in Babylonian literature as the spouse of the great mother goddess Ishtar, and, though the records are obscure, it appears that he was believed to be annually borne to the realm of the dead, whither his divine mistress followed him. During their absence reproduction ceases on earth and is not resumed until a messenger of Ea is sent to bring them back. The rites of Tammuz were celebrated just before the summer solstice. Dirges were then chanted over an effigy of the slain god, which was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, “while fumes of incense rose into the air, as if to stir his dormant senses by their pungent fragrance and wake him from the sleep of death.” In this, as in the allied cults of Osiris and Dionysos, the symbolism of the water as a fructifier is evident. “So far,” says Frazer,² “as the Semite personified the reproductive energies of nature as male and female . . . he appears to have identified the male power with water and the female especially with the earth.” A further illustration of the same idea appears in the disruption of the god’s body and the dispersal of the members in the sea, whence the head alone survives and becomes the focus of a new life—a trait common to the Adonis, Osiris,

¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, 6 ff.

Also Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 135: “Helios, der Erstling der Geweihten, auch ein *πατήρ*.”

² Frazer, *ibid.*, p. 14.

Orpheus, and Dionysos myths, and to a degree characteristic of them.¹

Thus the significance of the fishing ceremony can no longer be doubted. It symbolizes the recovery of the life-principle from the water, and as a piece of sympathetic magic doubtless had its practical value. For this reason the music of Orpheus attracts the fish, since the inhabitant of the deep is the zoömorphie symbol of life: thus he comes in Christian lore to be the symbol of the life eternal. The last fact has been interestingly brought out in the work of Robert Eisler on the *Origins of the Eucharist*.² "The underlying truism," he says, "is that Adonis was considered a fish-god, ἰχθύς, son of Derketo . . . , throughout Syria and Palestine. Accordingly, the well-known funeral rites of the Adonis-cult justify St. Jerome's popular etymology explaining the Palestinian fish-god Dag-on as *piscis tristitiae*." Moreover, Arabian reports, already analyzed by Chwolsen, Liebrecht, and Frazer, prove that Tammuz (according to St. Jerome "the great fish") . . . "was an old corn-god, and his passion identical with or at least equivalent to the reaping, threshing, grinding and finally the baking of the corn. The final act of worship seems to have been a sacrificial eating of a cake, formed, as in countless analogies of modern and ancient folk-lore, in the shape of the fish-god himself."³

Akin to the common idea of the death and rebirth of vegetation is the obvious fact of the increase and decrease in the sun's light and heat. It is surely questionable whether the

¹ Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, col. 1171: "Der Mythos von Orpheus' Tod und von seinem schwimmenden, nicht verwesenden Haupt ist daher eine sehr alte Nachbildung des byblischen Adonis-Osirismythos. Derselbe Mythos wurde auch auf Dionysos übertragen: auch der Gott wird zerrissen—wahrscheinlich in 14 Teile, wie Osiris—auch das Haupt des Dionysos ist auf Lesbos angeschwommen."

² See above.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

vegetation myths in question are fundamentally solar. But it would be equally hazardous to deny all solar symbolism to them: light and heat are too plainly creative forces. The Mithra mysteries, of which Cumont has made such a masterful study,¹ are avowedly a light-cult: the reborn soul mounts through the stars to the source of all light; light is the organizing factor in nature, it brings the elements together, their disruption is synonymous with death. The widespread doctrine of the Rebirth comes to include the solar idea.² But it is to be expected that more emphasis would be laid in the north³ upon the sun's regenerative power than in Egypt and her Mediterranean neighbors, where water is the prime necessity. Thus, despite the testimony of writers like Diodorus and Macrobius, we may agree with Hepding and Frazer in denying to Osiris and Attis, and their agrarian congeners, any immediate connection with the sun.⁴ This connection, rather, is late and due to "der synkretischen Sonnenverehrung des ausgehenden Heidenthums."⁵ So,

¹ Cf. *St. John*, vi, 11-13, and xxi, 1-15, where Christ appears to the disciples by the sea-shore: "And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

See, in the same gospel, the colloquy of Jesus and Nicodemus, ch. iii, 5—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Cf. Dieterich, *op. cit.*, 175 ff.

² A. Nutt and K. Meyer: *Voyage of Bran*, II (*Celtic Doctrine of the Rebirth*), London, 1897; E. S. Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, London, 1894, vol. I, esp. ch. II. To the stories there mentioned of the 'King of the Fishes type,' should be added the episode of Raphael and the fish in the Book of Tobit; see Rosenmann, *Studien zum Buche Tobias*, 1894.

³ Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, London, 1898, pp. 208-209. The Welsh gorsedd must be held "face to face with the sun and the eye of light, as there is no power to hold a gorsedd under cover or at night, but only where and as long as the sun is visible in the heavens." See, also, Lewis F. Mott, *Round Table* in *M. L. Publ.*, xx (1905), 231 ff.

⁴ Hepding, *op. cit.*, ch. vi; Frazer, *Adonis*, bk. 3, ch. vii.

⁵ Hepding, *l. c.*

too, "le rapport qui existe entre Mithra et le Soleil est celui qui existe entre la lumière et l'astre qui en est la manifestation la plus éclatante."¹ Nevertheless, in all these cases when the particular myth was generalized from a local cult to one of almost universal importance, the analogy to the great luminary lay close at hand and, once suggested, was quickly carried out. Thus we see that Adonis, wounded by a wild boar, in the myth leaves Aphrodite to pass the winter months with Persephone, while in the cult he is carried in as a corpse on a bier, and later he is gathered up in a new shape from the sea—the first act being accompanied with lamentations, the second with rejoicing.² In the Egyptian mysteries Osiris,³ afterwards identified with the sun-god Ra, was represented as dead, dismembered, and resurrected. Herodotus describes the annual celebration of his passion at Sais : it then happened that "Isis in the image of a cow, made of gilt wood with a golden sun between its horns," went forth from her chamber to search for her spouse. In Plutarch's time a similar ceremony was observed about the winter solstice.⁴ An inscription at Philae reads, "this is the form of him whom no one may name, Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters." In like manner during the Anthesteria Dionysos leaves his temple to wed the Queen ; it was then that he was considered to live. And, finally, in the Dendrophoria, a tree⁵ sacred to Attis was shrouded like a corpse and burned while the bystanders lamented, whereupon the Great Mother searched for him and was joined to him anew ; in Rome this was the kernel of the Attis-Cybele cult, which had been established there as

¹ Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, 225, n. 1.

² Frazer, *Adonis*, bk. 1, ch. 1 ; Foucart, *Culte de Dionysos*, 143 ff. ; Gruppe, *Hdb.*, 1530.

³ Frazer, *Adonis*, bk. 3, ch. iv.

⁴ *De Iside*, 52 ; Frazer, *Adonis*, 261.

⁵ Hepding, *Attis*, 220, and *passim* for influence on Christianity.

early as 204 B. C., and which was thence carried westward and northward. In all of these cases, the special concept was absorbed toward the end of the pagan period into the belief of a supreme, universal sun-god.

III.

We see from the above discussion that Simrock's early suggestion furnishes the most plausible explanation of the Grail question. What remains of the Grail romances when stripped of the Perceval-Galaad quest is clearly a vegetation ceremony. In this the central figure is the Fisher King, the medium of comparison, the *tertium quid* whereby the ancient and the mediæval records can be compared. It is hardly necessary to repeat here the agreements upon which the argument rests; for the most part they are self-evident. It is far more important to show how the Grail story thus viewed acquires purpose and to a certain degree consistency.

The Holy Grail, by the mediæval romancers often conceived in terms of a quest, is *au fond* an initiation, the purpose of which is to ensure the life of the vegetation spirit, always in danger of extinction, and to admit the "qualified" mortal into its mystery (Joseph, v. 935: *la sunt li grant secré escrit*). I do not believe we can go far wrong in insisting on both its agrarian and its mystic features. For though both may not be present to the same degree in the romances in which the ceremony has been handed down, it is at present difficult to state where the one feature ceases and the other begins. Like the Eleusinia, the Grail rites may have been agrarian¹ and mystic from the start. At all events, no positive distinction is to be made.

¹See Mott, *op. cit.*, for the "round table" as an agricultural rite; also W. Hertz, *op. cit.*, 461, on the festival known as a 'grail.' As Mott says, p. 256, Arthur's refraining from eating until he has heard of some adventure, "is possibly connected with primitive rites."

On this basis, then, the Grail theme contains three essential figures and three important symbols. They are :—

I. The Fisher King, an intermediary between the two planes of existence,¹ the present and the hereafter ; himself the symbol of the creative, fructifying force in nature, specifically associated with water or 'moisture.' The representative of the otherworld, he is also the guide to it, perhaps as Nutt has suggested, the Dis or Pluto of the Celtic Hades.² Hence he is described as fishing on the water,³ as directing

¹ Miss Weston has kindly called my attention to the description of the Grail found in the *Prose Lancelot* : "for 'twas not of wood, nor of any manner of metal, nor was it in any wise of stone, nor of horn, nor of bone" (*Arth. romances not in Malory*, VI, London, 1903). In *Syr Gawayne and the Grene Knyghte* Gawain carries the invincible sign, the pentangle ; and the *Espée as estranges renges* in Q. bears the inscription, *memoire de sens*, which in the Dutch version reads : *Gedankennisse van Sinne*. This all points to a mystical, almost theosophic, interpretation, which might lead to Cornelius Agrippa's (fifteenth century) idea of the three planes of existence with their respective colors. For modern parallels, see *L'Initiation, Revue philosophique*, vol. 73, 1903. Cf. also Andrew Lang's essay in Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth* of 1691, republished by D. Nutt, London, 1893. The question of the influence of the mediæval 'magic' might be profitably investigated, if cautiously approached ; for no boundary can be set to allegorizing. At the same time we must assume that the Grail-cult was primarily a blood-ritual which had a very definite and rather palpable meaning, and therefore it seems reasonable that the inscription *memoire de sens* was a summons to remember the blood and not to fall asleep as Gawain does in the *Perlesvaus* (Pot., I, 89). This particular question is, I believe, to be treated in Miss Weston's forthcoming volume, to which I refer the reader.

² In his recent (1908) *Habilitationschrift* at Zurich, Pestalozzi considers the Lohengrin-legend from a similar point of view. From a *compte-rendu* of it I gather that he deems Lohengrin a kind of water-spirit to whom the swan is sacred.

³ Heinzel, *Grailromane*, 71, has observed the effect, in Wauchier, of the Grail visit on the streams and rivers (v. 20340 ff.) :

Onques teus ne fu esgardée
Tière ki si bien fust garnie
D'aigue, de bos, de prairie :

the Arthurian knight to the Grail castle, as officiating as Perceval's host, as presiding at the Grail repast, as being the person of whom the question must be asked, as being succeeded by the Grail knight. And his weakness or infirmity agrees with Nature's declining strength; thus his land lies waste or is under the ban of enchantment.

This conception of the character, as the focus of a ritual, is, I believe, organic in the Grail romances. As with the mysteries, however, we shall be forced to distinguish the ritual from the mythic side of the character. And the myth of the Fisher King in Celtic territory alone will require a separate study. Here I can refer in the briefest manner only to the scattered contributions made by Nutt, Rhys, J. Loth, and others. It is reasonably certain that one of his earliest Celtic forms is Manannán mac Lir,¹ the great shape-

C'estoit li roiaumes destruis.
N'estoit pas plus que mienuis,
Le soir devant, que Dex avoit
Rendu issi com il devoit
As aiges lor cors el païs ;
Et tout li bos, ce m'est avis
Refurent en verdor trové.

Cf. 'Elucidation' also.

¹On shape-shifting in Wales and Ireland, see Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, Oxford, 1901, vol. II, ch. XI. Another son of Lir ('ler' = sea) is Bran, concerning whom see below, p. 404. Rhys, *op. cit.*, 549, says: "it is to be borne in mind that the Lir-Llyr group [in the *Mabinogion*] is strikingly elemental in its patronymic Lir, Llyr. The nominative . . . was *ler*, 'sea,' and so Cormac renders Mac Lir by *filius maris*." See also Loth, *op. cit.*, I, 97, and Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 216.

Nicholson, *Keltic Researches*, London, 1904, pp. 12 ff., connects the name Manannán with "Menapii" = 'Watermen'; cf. Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, II, 165. The *Yellow Book of Lecan* says of Mac Lir: "a celebrated merchant . . . between Erin, and Alban, and Manann, and a Druid . . . , and . . . the best navigator that was frequenting Erin . . . *Et ideo Scoti et Britones eum dominum maris vocaverunt et inde filium maris*"—cf. above.

Manannán's son Mongan (K. Meyer and A. Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, I, 42—

shifter of the Irish, the Manawyddan ab Llyr of Welsh romance. Manannán is clearly an otherworld being, who lures to his realm the Irish hero Cúchulinn. This story is told in the *Serglige Conculaind*,¹ which Brown adduces as the earliest type of the Yvain story, and which Rhys connects with the *Peredur*.² Whatever these relationships may be, in Wales we do find the character closely connected with Pwyll, whose French counterpart is Pelles³ (in Perl. he is still the 'King of the Low Folk'), originally the Fisher King's brother, then the Fisher King himself (Q., GS.). With Pwyll, Manawyddan dwells in Caer Sidi or Caer Pedryvan, *i. e.*, the Four-cornered Castle (cf. Perl., 328 : *Il aprochent le chastel et virent IIII areines sonner aux IIII chief de la vile*), and there the Cauldron of Hades is kept.⁴

In several minor⁵ matters Manannán suggests the Fisher King : he has a mantle of invisibility ; he supplies ale which preserves from death and old age ; his land suffers from enchantments⁶ ; his sword leaves "no relic of stroke or blow behind." Essentially the same character occurs under other names and with varying attributes, though the fundamental concept seems to be constant. Thus we find Gwy-
 ̃no Garanhir⁷ (according to Rhys,⁸ 'Long-crane') famous

90) also is known for his power of shifting his shape as well as that of others. The sea-king Mangon in *Diu Cróne* may be a "distortion" of Mongan, cf. Lucy A. Paton, *Fairy Myth. of Arth. Romance*, 113 ; the romancers, she thinks, confused his name with that of Morgain the *fée*.

¹ From the *Lebor Na H-Uidre*, Windisch, *Irische Texte*, I, 119-227.

² A. C. L. Brown, *Iwain*, 34 ff.; Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 218.

³ My *Glastonbury and the Holy Grail* in *Mod. Phil.*, I, 254.

⁴ Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 300 ff., 259, where he classifies together Pwyll, Bran, Urien, Uther Ben (the Urban of D.), Pellam, etc.

⁵ A summary can be found in A. C. L. Brown, *Iwain*, 42, note ; also O'Curry, *On the manners, etc.*, II, 198.

⁶ See Loth, *Mabinogion*, I, 101 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 244, note.

⁸ *Arth. Leg.*, 316.

in Welsh both for the fish he catches and the *mwys* or basket which can supply the whole world with food: every first of May eve, fish to the value of a hundred pounds were caught in his weir.¹ Rhys had already identified him with the Fisher King, with reference partly to the curious dialogue in the *Black Book of Carmarthen* between him and *Gwyn*,² which latter name may be reflected in Manessier's *Goon* and Crestien's *Gonemans*. Thus, as *Gwyn* and *Finn* appear to be parallel forms,³ the story of Finn and the Salmon of Wisdom mentioned above most likely pertains to the same group of ideas.⁴

II. The Grail Knight—Perceval, Bors, Galaad, Gawain—is the initiate. As such he must qualify specially and is responsible for the success of the Grail service, since if he fails the crops fail and “the springs run dry” (E.). Having succeeded, he is not only *ἐπόπτης* in the sense that he beholds the vision (sin, for example, prevents Lancelot in *Perl.* from seeing the Grail), but he shares in the secrets of the Grail, and becomes the Fisher King's successor.⁵

III. The Fisher-King's father or “double.” He stands for the life-god himself.⁶ Therefore, some versions represent

¹ Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, 387.

² Loth, *op. cit.*, I, 244.

³ Above, note 2, p. 367. In *Perl.* there is a *roi de la gaie*.

⁴ See Nutt, *Studies*, ch. VII.

⁵ The blood relationship is not clear. The Grail Knight probably originally descends in the female line; see Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, 682—the son of the sister among the Picts. The idea of sonship may have arisen, too, from the fact that the Fisher King was probably like Poseidon, Attis, Helios, etc., a *πατήρ*, though not in a physical sense; cf. A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 135. Thus finally the Grail Knight becomes the Fisher King's lineal grandson, as for instance, Galaad.

⁶ Martin, *Parzival*, *Introd.*, p. lviii, states that “*ueberzeugend hat ihn Rhys, Arth. Leg.*, 367, wiedergefunden” in the Cronus legend related by Plutarch as current among the Britons. Martin refers to the Fisher King,

him, like Osiris, Adonis, Dionysos, as dead upon a bier with a broken sword by his side (Wa., E.). Probably more primitive is the concept that he lies in a room (the *autre chambre* of C.), which the Fisher King alone can enter, or in a sumptuous palace or island (*Huth-Merlin*¹ and Perl.), where the Grail hero finds him. I take it that it was he originally who was wounded by the lance or sword, in the vital (generative) part like Adonis (Osiris), and that he was not so much to be avenged as to be healed. Him the Grail serves with its miraculous food²; to him the mystic question, *cui on en sert*, doubtless refers. In Q., especially, he is called the "Lame King," though this name is more suitably

though the similarity is rather with the father or 'double' in the room, island, or sumptuous palace. Cronus is, of course, the Gr. *κρόνος*, not only in name, see Plutarch, but also in attribute, cf. Roscher, *Lexikon*, col. 1481 ff., and O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, pp. 392, 395. Roscher maintains that the story is "zum grössten Teile alles andere als keltisch u. gehört durchaus in die klassische Mythologie" but is compelled to admit Northern elements in it. The idea of the "slumbering god" is widespread; cf. Merlin, Barbarossa, Endymion, Arthur (even in Sicily), Ogier, etc. But the version of Plutarch cannot be explained on that basis alone; making all due allowance for syncretism with Greek concepts, it must have had a basis in local Celtic beliefs: people who reach the island where Cronus is imprisoned and watched over by Briareus must serve him for 13 years; the island is so fine a place that then they prefer to remain; Cronus himself lies in a cave between crags, buried in slumber, and waited on by deities, formerly his companions, now his servants. According to Pliny, *Nat. His.*, 4; 94, 104, the Arctic Ocean was called *κρόνιον πέλαγος*, perhaps after the planet Saturn. Cf. Rhys, *Hib. Lect.*, *passim*.

On the idea of the "double," cf. A. Lang, *op. cit.*, p. xxv.

¹ II, 27: here he is Joseph of Arimathea, possibly too in Perl., as Heintel suggests, though there he may be Evalach (Avalloc), since no name is given. Cf. above.

² *Conte del Graal*, vv. 7796-7800:

D'une sole oiste li sains hom
Quant en ce Gréal li aporte,
Sa vie sostient et conforte,
Tant sainte cose est li Graaus.

given his son or brother, the Fisher King ; but I see no reason for supposing that the latter had it originally.

IV. The Grail—in some instances, the *Rich Grail*¹—paralleled in the mysteries by the *κίστη* or Holy Box, is the receptacle for the divine food (wafer or blood) by partaking of which the mortal establishes a blood-bond with the god. Thus it comes naturally to possess talismanic properties, primarily providing food, but also preserving from disease and decay, distinguishing the faithful from the sinners, and even ensuring victory in battle.² This leads by easy stages to its identification in the twelfth century, through the medium of a holy blood legend, with the relic of Calvary, and thence with the cup of the Last Supper. The avenue of transmission may have been a monastery, possibly Glastonbury or Fécamp. The special importance of Glastonbury I hope to point out in my edition of the *Perlesvaus*. Here, however, I desire to call attention to an interesting point in connection with Fécamp.

Fécamp, according to legend, owes its name to a fig-tree³: “Fescamp pour le figuier nommé.” The story

¹ In ms. B. N. f. 12,576 (the best Gerbert ms. according to Jessie L. Weston, *Arth. Rom. Unrepres. in Malory*, vi, 1903, p. 76).

² Heinzel, *Grälromane*, 178–179.

³ Jessie L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, i, London, 1906, pp. 157 ff. Another account not cited by Miss Weston is found in *Gallia Christiana*, xi, 204: “Eo in sanctuario asservant religiosissime et venerantur monachi pretiosum, ut aiunt, sanguinem, id est ex majorum traditione aliquantum terrae aut pulveris, ipso Jesu Christi sanguine pateretur respersi. Terra illa plumbeos tubos duos essarcit in argenteis duobus aliis tubis inclusos, quos complectitur paxis ex auro inaurata, et ipsa in pulcherrima, seu turri seu conflata ex eodem metallo pyramide comprehensa. Quo tempore, quave ratione, tanto pignore locupletati sint Fiscannenses non produnt monumenta. Docent tamen diu absconditum fuisse ; dum vero quo loci depositum esset ignoraretur ab omnibus, repertum esse feliciter xiv Calend. Augusti anno 1170 in muro, seu potius in columna quadam, quam muros undique circumvestiebat. Non desunt qui religiosum pretiosi hujus

runs that after the Crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus remove the blood from Christ's wounds, and that Nicodemus conceals a portion of it in a glove. In course of time this glove is passed on to Nicodemus's heir Isaac. The latter goes to Sidon, and being warned there of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, he conceals the relic in the trunk of a fig-tree, together with another relic, presumably the knife with which the blood had been removed. Finding that the country is no longer safe, Isaac cuts down the tree and commits the trunk with the two relics, now encased in leaden tubes, to the sea. The trunk is washed ashore at Fécamp, where after sending forth "three saplings," it is found by the children of a certain Bos, and afterwards transported by an angel disguised as a pilgrim to the spot where the abbey stands. Later, during Lothaire's reign, the history of the relics is made known to St. Waninge in a trance.¹ In this way Fécamp comes, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, to have strong claims to the possession of the Holy Blood—claims which the Norman kings, especially Henry II, tended to exploit. Certain of the Perceval MSS. even, in the section relating to Mont Dolorous, cite as their authority,

"le conte . . . qui a Fescans
est toz escrits,"

though we need not go so far as Miss Weston, to whom this discovery is due, and regard that testimony as necessarily trustworthy.

sanguinis cultum elevare conati sunt; sed sacrae theologorum Parisiensium facultatis decreto satis confutati sunt v. Cal. Junii anno 1448, in hunc modum: *Non repugnat, inquiunt illi, pietati fidelium credere, quod aliquid de sanguine Christi effuso tempore Passionis, remanserit in terris, ut refert Argentraeus Collect. Judicior. de novis errorib. tom. i, p. 250.*" This passage was known to Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 40.

¹Leroux de Linsey: *Essai sur l'abbaye de Fescamp*, Rouen, 1840; Gourdon de Genouillac, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Fécamp*, 1875.

Now the tree containing the blood of the slain god is an important feature in the rites of the Mediterranean vegetation-deity. Frazer¹ says: "The character of Osiris as a tree-spirit was represented very graphically in a ceremony described by Firmicus Maternus. A pine-tree having been cut down, the center was hollowed out, and with the wood thus excavated an image of Osiris was made, which was then buried like a corpse in the hollow of the tree." Or, according to the myth of Osiris,² a "coffer containing the body of Osiris had floated down the river and away out to sea, till at last it drifted ashore at Byblus, on the coast of Syria. Here a fine *erica*-tree shot up suddenly and enclosed the chest in its trunk. The king of the country, admiring the growth of the tree, had it cut down and made into a pillar of his house. Word of this came to Isis and she journeyed to Byblus and sat down by the well, in humble guise, her face wet with tears." Finally, "in the likeness of a swallow [she] fluttered round the pillar that contained her dead brother, twittering mournfully." In the rites of Attis a pine-tree was cut down, swathed like a corpse and decked with violets, then an effigy, doubtless of the god himself, was tied to the stem. In the ensuing ceremony the clergy "gashed their bodies with potsherds or slashed them with knives in order to bespatter the altar and the sacred tree with their flowing blood."³

These citations are sufficient to show that in the Fécamp story we are face to face with an almost identical vegetation myth. The sacred tree, the blood ceremony, the knives, the recovery from the sea, the sprouting of the tree, and the

¹*Adonis*, 276; Plumptre, *Narrative of a Three Years' Residence in France*, London, 180, III, 187, mentions a Breton tale in which Merlin's mistress encloses him in a tree (see Rhys, *Hib. Lect.*, 157-8).

²Frazer, *Adonis*, 214.

³*Adonis*, 167; Hepding, *Attis*, 158 ff.

concealment of the dead god in it are all in the Fécamp story. That the tree itself should be a fig-tree does not affect the argument. The fig-tree was sacred also at Eleusis; and especially in Rome,¹ where the feast celebrating the death of Romulus took place under the wild fig—the *caprificus*, as the Romans called it. Lack of space prevents my treating the question here fully. Besides, I prefer to leave it in abeyance. It should be noted, however, that from the discovery of a Gallo-Roman cemetery near Fécamp it is not precluded that Fécamp was open to such eastern cults as Roman civilization carried with it into the north. The Cybele-Attis cult was one of these; and the mention of the Phœnician Sidon in the Fécamp story is certainly curious. Without examining further the question of the fish-goddess Derketo or the fish-god Dagon (see above), it will be sufficient to note that *Sidon* is the diminutive of *Sid*, which means 'fisher,' the eponymous god of the place Sidon.² "His Sumerian name," says Eisler,³ "Zag-ḥa, has been singled out by Thureau-Dangin in the Gudea inscriptions, the earliest records of civilized mankind." Furthermore, the special Nicodemus⁴ episode that is found embedded in the Wauchier account of the *Gawain-Grail* visit—in which Nicodemus commits to the sea a crucifix which he had carved "after life"—suggests the images of their deities which the Egyptians carved out of the sycamore wood, the sycamore like the tamarisk being sacred to Osiris. Finally,

¹ Frazer, *Kingship*, 270.

² See C. P. LaGrange: *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, Paris, 1903, pp. 130, 374.

³ *Op. cit.*, 2; Frazer, *Adonis*, 13.

⁴ Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 45, with list of references on the episode; for text, see Jessie L. Weston, *Sir Perceval*, I, 162. Cf. E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, Leipzig, 1899, and Foerster, *Sainte Vou de Luques* in the "Mélanges Chabaneau," on which see Schultz-Gora: *Zeit. rom. Phil.*, xxxii, (1908), 458-59.

in Perl,¹ in the hall in which the Fisher King receives the Grail knight, there is a *piler de coivre sur quoi un aigle seoit qui tenoit une croiz dor où il avoit de la veraie croiz à Dieu fu mis, autretant comme la croiz avoit de grant, que li preudons aouroit.*²

V. The Lance, known rarely as the lance of Longinus,³ is the weapon with which the deity's strength has been impaired. It is the instrument of sacrifice. This is still its characteristic in W. Thus, too, it is represented as dripping blood, like the sword of John the Baptist in Perl, which bleeds at noontide, and the sword whereby Joseph of Arimathea is injured in GS.⁴

In the Mabinogi of 'Math, son of Mathonwy,' a lance is the weapon whereby Llew (= Ir. Lug, Gaul. Lugus) is slain, as he stands with one foot on the back of a he-goat (evidently Capricornus), and the other beside a pail of water (Aquarius)—a clear instance of nature symbolism.⁵ By a lance, too,—a poisoned one—Bran is wounded in 'Branwen, daughter of Llyr,'—Bran⁶ the brother of Manawyddan,

¹ Potvin, *Perceval li Gallois*, I, 1866, p. 86. The Oxford text (Hatton, 82) has substantially the same reading.

² Cf. Mussafia: *Ueber die Legende v. d. heil. Kreuz*, in *Sitzungsber. der Wiener Akad.*, LXIII, 182, 189.

³ On the lance of Longinus see Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 9; also Bugge-Schofield, *Home of the Eddic Poems*, London, 1899, xxxviii; and Burdach, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, xxiv, 352.

⁴ Hucher, III, 217. With the lance should also be compared the venomous spear of Pezar, king of Persia, whose name is 'Slaughterer'; cf. "The Fate of the Children of Turenn" in Joyce, *Old Celtic Romances*, 59.

⁵ J. Loth, *op. cit.*, I, 117 ff. On the structure of the Mabinogion see the interesting articles of E. Anwyl: *The Four Branches of the Mabinogion*, beginning in vol. I of *Zeit. für Celt. Phil.* Math, according to Loth, 117, again occurs in the names Mathonwy, Matholwch, as a Plutonic character; cf. Rhys, *Lectures on Welsh Phonology*, 2nd ed., 413, 414.

⁶ Bran = "raven" (cf. Holder, *brāno-s*). See the material in Loth, *op. cit.*, I, 65-66, 83 and 94, and in Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, II, 552-553, where

the guardian of the cauldron of regeneration. Rhys sees in him "one of the principal names of the Celtic Dis." But, like his brother, he is essentially a water-god, and Goidelic in origin. He 'wades through the sea with "musicians on his back," he spans rivers so that armies pass over him, and after he is decapitated his head keeps his companions company, preventing them from growing old, until they bury it in the white hill of London. A number of saints in Welsh hagiology are connected with him.¹ In the Llangollen district his name appears in place-names; for instance, Castell Dinas Bran, lake Llyn Bran and Dinbran.² Presumably he is the Barintus³ of the *Vita Merlini*, and the Brennus⁴ of Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The name Danbran,⁵ given Perceval's sister in Perl., is perhaps a link. Is it not, therefore, clear, that he survives, as Nutt affirmed, in Brons the Fisher? In other words, that he is in Welsh (or Breton) myth what our Fisher King is in the Grail rites; primarily the dark deity of the waters, who is friendly to man? Like Mimir in Norse myth,⁶ the master of the *Binnengewässer*, the fertilizing power inherent in pond and pool, whose wisdom all creatures acknowledge?⁷

he is compared to Cernunnos, mainly because of his size. Also Nutt and Kuno Meyer: *Voyage of Bran, son of Febal*, London, 1895; Zimmer, *Brendan's Meerfahrt in Zeit. deut. Alterth.*, xxxiii (1889).

¹ Rees, *Welsh Saints*, 77; *Iolo MSS.*, 100, 8, 40; *Zeit. Celt. Phil.*, i, 287. See also Whitley Stokes, *Zeit. Celt. Phil.*, i, 63:

"Brénainn (of Clonfert) loved intense devotion, according to synod and assembly. Seven years on the back of the whale, the arrangement of devotion was a hardship." See Zimmer, *op. cit.*, 181, 303, ff; also A. Schulze, *Zur Brendanlegende in Zeit. rom. Phil.*, xxx, 276 ff. Brendan's association with the whale is, I believe, more direct than Schulze admits.

² Anwyl, *Zeit. Celt. Phil.*, iii, 132.

³ A. C. L. Brown, *Revue Celtique*, xxii, 339-344.

⁴ Anwyl, *Zeit. Celt. Phil.*, i, 287.

⁵ Potvin, i. In *Mod. Phil.*, i, 250, I sided with Heinzel, *Gralromane*, 94, wrongly, I now believe.

⁶ W. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 179.

⁷ The Black Fisherman in Campbell, see above, p. 367, n. 1.

So the independence of the lance from the Grail, noticed by several scholars,¹ has much in its favor. Sacramentally they are opposites: the one impairs life, the other sustains it. Yet as a part of the ritual the lance is of prime importance, since it impairs life only in order to sustain it elsewhere, the process being imitative or rather 'sympathetic' of what occurs in Nature. Thus the sacrifice is vicarious. Hence it becomes technically possible, as in P., to have a Grail romance in which the Grail is replaced by an equivalent; namely, the head on the salver.²

VI. The Sword, which in at least three versions (C., W., G.) Perceval receives as a gift from the Fisher King, and which is then broken and remade, is a symbol similar to the sword of Manannán, foster-father of the Irish light-god Lug, and the mythic counterpart of our Fisher King. In general, it is thus identical with the well known Celtic Sword of Light, the quest of which figures in the Irish version of the Werewolf story, in connection with which it has been discussed by Professor Kittredge.³ To this discussion I can add nothing, except to repeat that in the Irish *märchen* of *Morraha* ⁴ the Sword of Light is in the possession of the Rough Niall of the Speckled Rock, whereas in the tale of *Art and Balor Beimenach* its owner is King Under the Wave.

The original account of the Grail ⁵ sword has been much

¹ In G(erbert) the country folk rejoice because Perceval has asked after the lance, thus restoring the fruitfulness of the land; see Weston, *Sir Perceval*, pp. 140 ff.

² Loth, II, 60.

³ *Arthur and Gorlagon* in *Harv. Studies and Notes*, VIII, Boston, 1903, pp. 213 ff. On marvelous swords in Celtic material, see also Lucy A. Paton, *Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance*, Boston, 1903, pp. 199 ff., notes.

⁴ William Larminie, *West Irish Folk-Tales and Romances*, London, 1893, p. 15.

⁵ Jeremiah Curtin, *Hero Tales of Ireland*, London, 1894, p. 325. In the tale of *Coldfeet and the Queen of the Lonesome Island*, *ibid.*, 246, "the

obscured by the romancers, deliberately, it seems, by Wolfram,¹ who connects it, however, with the question concerning the Grail²:

dô was er vragens mit ermant.

Yet the following characteristics of it are clear³:—

It is made by a smith called Trebuchet; cf. O. F. *trébuechet*, an engine of war.⁴

He has made three weapons of the type.

It will stand but one blow, a second one breaks it—and in fact it does break against the gate of Paradise.

Thereupon it is mended in a lake, beneath a rock before daybreak; and the smith, who has mended it, at once dies.

sword of light that never fails, the loaf of bread that is never eaten, and the bottle of water that is never drained” are the property of the Queen of the Lonesome Island.

¹*Parzival*, 434, 25 has the following verses, which evidently represent a condensation:

Sîn swert, daz im Anfortas
gap dô er bîme grale was,
brast sît dô er bestanden wart:
dô machtez ganz des brunnen art
bî Karnant, der dâ heizet Lac
das swert gehalf im priss bejac.

²*Parz.*, 240, 6.

³Crestien, vv. 4314–21, 4332–35, 4345–46, 4836 ff.; for variant readings, see Miss Weston, *Sir Perceval*, 134; Manessier, vv. 41495–41582 (here the smith is called Tribuet); Gerbert in ms. B. N. f. 12,576 fo. 54^{vo} or Potvin, *Perceval li Gallois*, vi, 168–169; cf. Miss Weston, *ibid.*, 140 ff. The passages in Wolfram are *Parzival*, 239, 19 ff.; 240, 6; 253, 24 ff.; 434, 25 ff. On Miss Weston’s arguments, see E. Brugger in *Zeit. franz. Spr. u. Lit.*, xxxi, review section, 122–162; I do not, however, agree that Garlon “dürfte mit Wieland identisch sein;” see below. Further material on the Grail Sword I hope to publish elsewhere.

⁴See Weston, *op. cit.*, 150, where the name is connected with *trebucier* ‘to stumble’ or rather ‘to fall’, with a view to linking it with the lameness of Wayland. Miss Weston, however, herself adds: “this is only thrown out as a suggestion.”

The Sword of Light is of common occurrence in folklore. Arthur's sword, Excalibur,¹ noted for its intense brilliancy, belongs to the same class; so, it appears, does the sword of Heimdall² in Norse mythology, which is called *Hqfwð* or 'Head'—and Heimdall, we remember, is the son of nine virgins, whose names designate waves of the sea. The Sword of John the Baptist in Perl,³ for which Gawain undertakes a quest, shows traces of the same type: it has to be recovered from King Gurgalon, whose cannibalistic traits clearly identify him with the Welsh *Gurgi Garwlwyd*,⁴ whom the Triads hold up to scorn, the Garlan of the *Huth-Merlin*, the Garlon of Malory and the same name as Gorlagon,⁵ equating with the Welsh for "werewolf"; its size varies according to whether it is sheathed or drawn, and as I have shown elsewhere,⁶ it has the same part in the Grail

¹ Cf. J. Loth, *op. cit.*, I (*Rhonabury's Dream*), 301; "c'était si saisissant qu'il était difficile à qui que ce fût de regarder l'épée."

² W. Golther, *Germ. Myth.*, 362.

³ Potvin, I, 75 ff.; here the sword is as *clère comme une esmeraude et auresint vert*; in the hilt is a *seintime pierre* put there by *Enax*, emperor of Rome. Cf. the Lapidary, publ. by Paul Meyer, *Romania*, XXXVIII (1909), 57, 66 and 68.

⁴ Triads, I, 37, III, 45, 46; Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 73, 121.

⁵ Kittredge, *op. cit.*, 205 ff. Brugger, *op. cit.*, 132 says: "An der Richtigkeit von W.'s (Weston's) Hypothese, dass das Schwertmotiv (wenigstens theilweise) nordischen (normannischen) Ursprungs ist . . . kann man kaum zweifeln." That I accept, if the *theilweise* means *by means of later identification* with Germanic myth in French form (cf. Maurus, *Die Wiedlandsage in der Literatur*, Leipzig, 1902). But because Garlon is a magician and is concerned in a tale about a sword that breaks at one blow, this cannot be regarded as showing, as Brugger affirms, that he is originally the same personage as *Galaan* (< *Vallandus*). On the contrary, his name and his traits show him to be a "dark divinity" like our Fisher King, opposed in the story to Balaain or Balyne, Geoffrey's Belinus, the Apollo Belenus of the inscriptions. But he may later have been confused with *Galaan*, to whose forging Gawain's sword is attributed in the M. E. *Golagros and Gawayne*. For the inscription on Gawain's sword, see Paul Meyer, *Rom.* XXXIV, 98.

⁶ *Grail Romance Perlesvaus*, 55.

"service" (*le service du saintisme Graal*) as the Grail Sword in C.

To the French romancers Gawain is *par excellence* the knight of the sword.¹ Moreover, one of his notable traits is that his strength varies with the hour of the day, which Gaston Paris² interprets as "évidemment en rapport avec le cours du soleil." The *Espee as estranges renges* which he goes to find in C. (vv. 6090 ff.), at Montesclaire, judging by the last name, might have a similar meaning; that is, it may also be a symbol of light. The *Conte del Graal*,³ however, later identifies it with the sword of Judas Maccabaeus, which, it says, Joseph of Arimathea brought into the land: yet it lies concealed in a vault, the door of which closes itself, and it renders its wearer victorious. In the Dutch *Walewein*⁴ it belongs to King Amores, to whom it ensures victory, and in Q.⁵ and GS.⁶ we find it again, this time as

¹ *Histoire littéraire*, xxx (Gaston Paris), 29 ff.; *Le Chevalier à l'épée*, ed. Armstrong, Baltimore, 1900; Jessie L. Weston, *The Legend of Sir Gawain*, London, 1897. In Pierre Berquière, *Reductorium Morale*, bk. xiv, prologue, Gawain finds by chance a Palace under the Water, where there is a seat prepared for him and a table set with food; but as he starts to eat he sees a dead man's head in the platter, and a giant lying on a bier near the fire rises up and strikes his brow against the roof; the head speaks and forbids him to eat. In connection with this, it should be noted that on the journey to the kingdom of Gorre in Crestien's *Lancelot*, Gawain chooses the first of the *felons passages*, namely, *Li Ponz Evages* (*Charrete*, v. 660). Obviously Gawain has a marked relationship with an under-the-sea kingdom, all of which is in accord with the theory advocated in this paper. Compare the Perseus-like adventure related of him in *Perl.*, 252 ff., and especially in the *De Ortu Waluani*, ed. Bruce, *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xv, 326 ff. Peredur's adventure at the Court of the King of Suffering (*Loth*, *op. cit.*, II, 85) is also deserving of note on this question; the *Avanc* which he slays with the aid of the invisible-making stone, is evidently a water-spirit; see Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, 430. Cf. E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, London, 1894, vol. I, ch. 1.

² *Hist. litt.*, xxx, 35.

³ Weston, *Sir Perceval*, 225. ⁴ *Hist. litt.*, xxx, 83: *met de vreemde ringen*.

⁵ Ed. Furnivall, London, 1861-63, 182 ff.

⁶ Ed. Hucher, II, 446-452; Lonelich, *Seynt Graal*, London, 1861-63, ch. xxviii, v. 202.

the Sword of David in Solomon's ship. Like Excalibur, which has two snakes depicted on it in gold, and the sword of the Helgi Lay¹ with "the blood-stained serpent along the edge" (*liggr með eggju ormr dreyrfáiðr*), its hilt is here made of the bones of two *divierves biestes*: "La première estoit d'une manière de serpent qui convierse en Calidonie plus que en autres tière, si est apielée Papaguites; d'icelui serpent est tex la force qui se nus hom tient nule de ses costes u aucuns de ses autres os, il n'a garde de sentir nule trop grant calour ne par force de soleil ne pour escaufement de travail; ançois est toutes eures en mesureible calour tant com il le tient. D'itel manière et d'itel force est la première coste et l'autre si est un poisson qui n'est mie moult grans et si convierse ens u flun d'Euftrate et non pas en autre ewe. Chil poissons a non Cortenans, et ses costes sunt d'itel force que se uns hom en prent une, jà tant comme il le tenra ne li souvenra des joies ne de deus que il ait eu, fors seulement d'icelui cose pour quoi il l'aura prise; et maintenant que il l'aura jus mise, si repensera autressi com il est acoustumet à manière de nature honme."² When broken by Nascien, the sword is mended by Mordrain. It can be carried only by the *plus preus* and the *plus hardis*. In Q., Perceval's sister supplies it with hangings made with her own hair, and names its scabbard *memoire de sens*, which may or may not have mystical meaning.³

IV.

In conclusion be it said, that the above views are presented mainly as suggestions made on the basis of present

¹ Bugge-Schofield, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-327.

² Hucher, II, 447.

³ Cf. note, p. 395. In P. the hero's training is mainly in the use of the sword, though his epithet is *Paladyr Hir*; that is, "of the long lance." See Loth, *op. cit.*, II, 71.

material. Though the Grail ceremonies and the ancient mysteries have the same *leit-motiv*, there exists no reason for claiming any direct connection between them. While the fundamental concept of the Fisher King is doubtless a Mediterranean cult, it is quite possible that in the Grail romances it descends in direct line from the primitive Celts, the *Urkelten*, in Gaul, Wales and Ireland. As we have seen, the underlying fact is the identification of Life and Fertility with the creative power of moisture—and this idea is well-nigh universal. For example, we find it¹ among the Dakotas in North America, where the institution of the life-giving medicine-bag was in the control of Onktehi, “the great spirit of the waters”; and many other examples could doubtless be cited. It has recently been suggested² that this concept, in another form, lay at the basis of the earliest Greek ideas of the genesis of the universe: “Thales, the Milesian, declared that the first principle of things is water For he says that all things come from water and all are resolved into water.” The particular Gallo-Roman *Dēvona-Diana* cult which I have tried³ to point out in Crestien’s *Yvain* is but another manifestation of the same belief. Into the Druidic beliefs concerning the other life which classic writers have handed down, I have not been able to go. Their Pythagorean coloring is discussed by Nutt⁴ with the net result that the Celts had definite ideas of immortality and rebirth to which the doctrine of Pythagoras bore a resemblance. To this hypothesis our conclusions broadly

¹ G. H. Pond, *Dakota Superstitions*, St. Paul, 1867, pp. 35, 37–40; Frazer, *Golden Bough*², III, 432.

² By G. D. Hadzsits in an article on *Aphrodite and the Dione Myth*, in *Amer. Jour. Phil.*, xxx, 53.

³ *Modern Philology*, III, 267 ff.; VII, no. 3., where I have considerably amplified my former argument, with certain modifications.

⁴ *Voyage of Bran*, II: *The Celtic Doctrine of Rebirth*, II, 113.

conform.¹ The ritualistic nature of Celtic beliefs is attested by such classical writers as Pomponius Mela, Posidonius, Strabo, and others. Of especial interest in this connection is the description Mela gives of the priestesses of Sena,² who are able to "cause the sea and the wind by their incantations, to turn themselves into whatsoever animal form they choose, to cure diseases which among others are incurable." It is admitted that the Celtic rites were agricultural. At the same time the degree to which they were assimilated to non-Celtic cults brought in by the Romans is not known, and yet it is a matter of great importance. It would not be in place here to outline the many possibilities of such syncretism in the Grail question, but doubtless the very divergent views taken by such scholars as Nutt and Wesselofsky might here find some basis of reconciliation. And the long period of years from the introduction of Christianity until the appearance of Crestien's and Robert's poems is certainly ample time to allow for other eastern influences to have an effect. Thus the Grail might be originally Celtic in the concept of the Fisher King, and yet Diez's etymology³ be correct that the word *graal* = Prov. *grazal*, < *cratalis**, i. e., *cratus* (see Ducange, *Gloss. med. et inf. latin.*, s. v. *cratus*) for *crater* (cf. above the *crater* in the mysteries of Mithra). Pelles, also, may be the equivalent of the Welsh Pwyll and nevertheless reflect, through the medium of Ovid and the Provençal poets, the story of Peleus and the "wounding and healing lance," with which Wesselofsky connects the name⁴ (cf. the mention of Achilles in Perl.). Bron may be Bran and still we find Hebron as a variant. The *Beste glatissant* has several eastern parallels⁵—and so

¹ Rhys, *Hib. Lec.*, 196 ff.

² Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, ed. Parthey, III, ch. 6.

³ *Wörterbuch*, 1887, p. 602.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 374.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 379–80.

on. The centers of syncretism would seem to be the monasteries, Glastonbury and Fécamp. Here Celtic, Gallo-Roman, Oriental, and Mediæval-Christian strains would have an opportunity to mix and to be fused together; but the evidence to that effect is limited, in the case of Fécamp, to the assertion of several Wauchier MSS., an authority not above suspicion.¹ To be sure, the evidence for Glastonbury rests on the firmer foundation of internal evidence² (description of the Grail castle = Glastonbury abbey, Arthur's chapel ride in *Johannis Glastoniensis*, Perceval's ancestor Glais = Glast, etc., etc.); but here, too, the Grail theme was probably attracted by local Joseph and Arthur traditions, since Glastonbury records know nothing of it. Thus the stages whereby the primitive cult became the Grail legend of the twelfth century are likely to remain conjectural. Much depends certainly on the testimony of names, when they are attached to very similar ideas. Wauchier's Bleheris³ who,

¹ Brugger, *op. cit.*, 136 ff; Jeanroy, *Revue des lang. rom.*, L, 541-544.

² *Modern Philology*, I, 247-57.

³ *Romania*, xxxiv, 333-43; *Legend of Sir Perceval*, 288; Lot's "Bledericus de Cornwall" in *Romania*, xxviii, 336. Concerning Bleheris, it is to be noted:

(1) The name is of common occurrence in Cymric territory.

(2) The MS. reads,

si com le conte Bleheris
qui fu nés e engenüis
en Gales dont je cont le conte
e qui si le contoit au conte
de Poitiers qui amoit l'estoire
e le tenoit en grant memoire
plus que nul autre ne faisoit.—Fo. 241^{vo}.

That is, the story was presumably *oral*, and Bleheris may have been simply a narrator.

(3) The 'Elucidation' states that Gawain overcame Blihos-Bliheris, whom no man at Arthur's court knew, but he

si très bons contes savoit
Que nus ne se peüst lasser
De ses paroles escouter.

—Potvin, II, vv. 170-2.

as Miss Weston discovered, *told* his *conte* to the Count of Poitiers (B. N. Add. 36,614, fo. 241^{vo}), was perhaps the purveyor of a Gawain-romance before Crestien's time, to which Wauchier and the Elucidation are indebted; but we are left in the dark concerning the contents of that work, which seems to have been a compilation of divergent stories. Though it may be urged, as regards the Grail, that the incidents Wauchier has in common with the Elucidation were probably contained in it, yet that question, too, needs to be probed further.

For the present we are thus thrown back on Crestien's romance as the earliest extant text. In the Christianizing process his influence seems to have been inconsiderable: is this due to his failure to understand the meaning of the story? In any case, the Grail episodes occupy relatively little space in his poem; they do not by any means dominate as they do in the other French Grail works, and the only possibly Christian elements in the procession are the 'plate' and the host (*oiste*) which sustains the life of the

He tells of the court of the Fisher King, etc. Hence again a narrator.

(4) The same text further on in one group of mss. (B. N. f. 12577 fo. 133) contains a reference to a *grand conte* of which this is only a part, ending thus:

Cil de Loudon racontera
Que ce riche romans dira.

Miss Weston remarks, *Rom.*, xxxiv, 335, that *cil de Loudon* was not Wauchier nor the reputed author of the story, but a *jongleur*. Exactly. But that does not prevent us from regarding him as in the Comte de Poitiers's immediate *entourage*, since Loudon is near Poitiers.

(5) Bleheris is thus most likely, as Heinzel already suggested, the *famosus ille fabulator Bledhericus* of Giraldus Cambrensis, and one must agree with Gaston Paris (and Brugger, *op. cit.*) that he antedates Giraldus but by a little. Miss Weston informs me that Mr. Owen identifies him with a Bledhericus known in the *Brut y Tywysogion* and charters as *Latinarius* or 'interpreter,' whose dates are 1091-1147; cf. the *Gwentian Brut*, Rolls Series, London, 1860, p. 106.

Fisher King's father. A critical text is urgently needed. In the meanwhile it is idle to speculate on the basis of material consisting often of a single word or two. Of great moment, of course, is the book that Philip of Flanders gave the Champagne poet. Crestien¹ calls it a *livre*, the subject-matter of which is a *conte*, which he presents in the form of a *roumanz*. This sounds much like the verses in *Cligés* (vv. 20-23):

An un livres de l'aumeire
 De la fu li contes estrez,
 Don cest roumanz fist Crestiiens.

And knowing the sources there, we can judge to what extent he elaborated a situation by means of *motifs* taken from his general literary equipment. In the *Conte del Graal* his actual source may thus have been a sort of synopsis in which the Grail theme existed only in the barest outline; for Crestien's emphasis is on the biography of his hero, and this I take it need not have been in Count Philip's book. Yet Crestien builded better than he knew. He made the Grail legend enjoy literary vogue, and therefore those coming after him returned to the sources of which the *livre* gave only an imperfect synopsis. But the form of the tale they were powerless to change; that Crestien had fixed for all time. And so Wolfram reproduces the tale practically as Crestien had conceived it, as a test of chivalric conduct and moral fitness, in which the interest centers not in the Grail but in the knight whose worth has been revealed:

Wie Herzeloeyden kint den grâl
 erwarp.²

Not so the author of the metrical *Joseph*. He knows nothing of Perceval. He is bent on explaining the Grail,

¹ Potvin, II, 308, v. 67.

² *Parzival*, § 827, 6.

the precious vessel containing the blood of the slain god, which he likens to the eucharist. The extant text is assuredly Christian ; so much so, indeed, that one wonders at the insistence of the author and suspects his motive. Yet in one respect the primitive basis seems to me nowhere more evident. For if the *Joseph* were really Christian, would not Joseph and Peter have sufficed to bring the holy vessel to England ? And if, as Heinzel¹ maintains, the ecclesiastical view was that Joseph remained in the Orient, though legend allowed him to come to Glastonbury, then could not Nicodemus have brought the Grail ? The author of the *Joseph* knew the apocrypha ; moreover, he mentions Nicodemus as associated with Joseph. In Perl. we have an example of the Grail lineage springing from him. Hence it is clear, as Nutt² and Heinzel³ have affirmed, that the author has amalgamated two traditions ; namely, the Joseph story and that of Brons and the fish. The latter, we recall, Nutt connects with Finn through the medium of the Welsh Bran. In this I agree with him, for Bran, as we have seen, is an evident water-deity, and his attributes and the curious incident of his 'head' are indications of an agrarian nature.⁴ Thus the *Joseph* preserves for us, in spite of its Christian garb, the one clear instance of the connection of the Grail rites with the class of primitive beliefs from which they sprang.

¹ *Gralromane*, 92, 95. Cf. also Hulme, *The Middle-English Harrowing of Hell*, E. E. T. S., 1907, pp. lxxvii ff.

² *Studies*, 66, 218.

³ *Gralromane*, 92.

⁴ Rhys, *Hib. Lect.*, 666, where Bran is said to be a Chthonian deity ; cf. also, *Celtic Folklore*, 552. Of great interest is the Amaethon, son of Don, mentioned in the *Kulhwch and Olwen* (Loth I, 240) ; his agrarian nature has long been recognized (see Rhys, *Arth. Leg.*, 42, 157, 245-246), but Rhys's identification of him with the Amangons of the 'Elucidation' (v. 63) seems open to question. *Amangons* suggests *Mangon* ; cf. above, p. 397. For further details see Miss Weston, *Sir Perceval*, I, 276-282.

But granting that the basis of the Grail theme is an agrarian cult, the various elements of myth which helped to shape the poetic story remain to be determined. Many of these are accessible, I believe, in Celtic literature. In making this statement I am aware of the great liability to error involved in such an investigation ; for we are in danger of identifying what was originally quite distinct, and story *motifs* repeat themselves like the plots of the drama. But though the historical and purely literary elements in Arthurian story demand our attention first, because they provide the securest footing, nevertheless the mythic side is of very great importance. The problem, of course, is to single out what part is myth, what part history, and what part individual fancy. Difficult as this is, it is made less so by the fact that the mediæval romancer often failed to grasp the significance of his material, which thus assumed curiously contradictory shapes in the woof of his indiscriminating fancy.

As a working hypothesis Rhys's¹ suggestion, after all, succeeds best in defining this mythic side, from the point of view of the recurrent elements in the stories. I cannot refrain from recapitulating his view here as it appears to work out in the instances I have studied. The dark divinity, living beyond or beneath the water, is the task master of the hero of light ; by one means or another, directly by his own efforts or indirectly through a messenger, beautiful or loathsome—as circumstances require—he lures the latter to his abode ; there he remains until freed by the efforts of a friend, often the culture-hero himself. Variations on this theme are as many as the human fancy can conceive ; but the initial, organic idea is constant. In the particular story group we are considering, Gawain or Perceval, Lancelot or Galaad are con-

¹*Arth. Leg.*, 233, 37.

stantly being summoned by messenger or incident to the court of the Fisher King, and King Arthur's main effort is to recover them and maintain the integrity of his order. Thus the mythic force of Arthurian Romance in general is the primitive struggle of man to compel and control the natural, specifically agricultural, forces on which his existence depends; the particular form in which the Grail stories have handed it down is as a life-cult resembling the Greek mysteries.

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